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Problem-Solving and Partnership:

**A Study of the Role of Neighbourhood Action Groups in
Neighbourhood Policing**

**This thesis is being submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

Department of Social Policy and Criminology

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Abstract

This thesis looks at the implementation of neighbourhood policing by studying two case study neighbourhoods within the Thames Valley Police. The study focusses on the Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) which exists in each neighbourhood. It comprises police, partner organizations (such as the local council, schools, businesses etc.) and some residents. The group puts the problem-solving role of the neighbourhood policing agenda into practice. The NAG attempts to take on board local concerns and prioritize the resolution or amelioration of these problems in their neighbourhood. In so doing the group must navigate a set of concepts which are riven with subjectivity and open to wide-ranging interpretation.

The thesis looked at one NAG (Neighbourhood B) from before its initial implementation up until it established itself and began working on its priority problems. The research also observed a more established NAG (Neighbourhood A) which had been working on its priority problems for some time. In this way it was possible to follow the process in its entirety, including the consultation process, the formation of the NAG, initial problem-solving approaches and the problems faced by the group as it grapples with longer term problems.

In looking at the NAG the thesis uses a 'nodal governance of security' approach. This locates the NAG as one 'node' linked into a larger network of security providers and governors. The group, in bringing together a selection of interested parties to work on the provision of security to a neighbourhood.

Using this 'nodal governance' analysis, the thesis sets out a number of recurring difficulties which the NAGs face when trying to operate as a group of partner organizations. It further used the approach to look at how difficult the problem-solving process is for NAGs operating as 'nodes'. NAGs are still in their infancy, but

it is clear that there are many problems, as well as much potential, ahead for them in implementing the neighbourhood policing agenda.

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Abbreviations

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ASB	Anti-social behaviour
ASBO	Anti-social Behaviour Order
BCU	Basic Command Unit
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CAPS	Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
EVA	Environmental Visual Audit
HMIC	Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary
ILP	Intelligence-led Policing
KCPPE	Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment
LPA	Local Policing Authority
NAG	Neighbourhood Action Group
NPP	Neighbourhood Priority Profile
NRPP	National Reassurance Policing Project
NYPD	New York Police Department
OU	Open University
PAT	Problem Analysis Triangle
PC	Police Constable
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
POP	Problem-oriented Policing
PSO	Private Security Officer
SARA	Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment

SCP	Signal Crimes Perspective
TVP	Thames Valley Police
VAF	Visibility, accessibility and familiarity

Introduction

Since the research described in this thesis began, neighbourhood policing teams have been put in place in every neighbourhood in England and Wales. Every member of the public in the jurisdiction should theoretically be able to find out who their neighbourhood officer is and contact them directly with the non-emergency problems that affect them and impact on their quality of life. The problems may be criminal activity, or anti-social behaviour, or anything else with which the police constabularies tend to deal with as the social service of last resort. A vaguely inquisitive person, prepared to go to their local police station will have no problems finding out the name of their local neighbourhood officer, and perhaps even getting to know them, and discussing their problems with them. If they are really motivated, they may be able to join a Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) and raise their concerns there with the police and other agencies who are trying to work holistically to solve the problems of most concern to that neighbourhood's residents and other members of the public who frequent the area. Policing has begun to concern itself with the micro as well as the macro problems of social control. In so doing it has begun to work locally to provide a police service for the local people which deals with their concerns. It is attempting to provide a service that is 'what people want'.

This approach to policing looks superficially appealing, because it seems to bring us back to an era when policing was local, police constables were known to everyone and were able to sort out the problems of the area with a little bit of local knowledge and some pragmatic small-p political maneuvering within their beat. The 'bobby on the beat' is thus an iconic component of the national notion of policing in England

and perhaps even a deeply engrained statement of an England to which many people aspire or feel nostalgically about (Loader, 1997). If that experience of policing ever in fact existed, and it is not certain that it did, it is exceptionally difficult to see how it could possibly work in the late-modern pluralist globalized free-market democracy that England has become since the so-called 'consensus' era of British policing in the 1950s (McLaughlin, 2007: 81-83).

Policing at its heart is not exactly like any other public service. Nor indeed is it precisely like, or subject to the same economic forms of accountability which characterize private profit-driven enterprises (McLaughlin and Murji, 1997). Policing, as discussed in the first chapter of this work, is a complex component of social ordering, within which one (historically recent) development has been the uniformed policing provided by constituent authorities of the nation state. This form of policing model effectively reserves the legal use of physical force to one body of trained state agents (Bittner, 1990). In return for a communal agreement not to use force (except when absolutely necessary, and thus legally, such as in self defence), the nation state's body of state agents will apply such force when necessary in order to provide security for those who are deemed to be due the state's protection. This social contract not to use force against fellow subjects in return for the protection of the nation-state is central to the philosophy of Hobbes who posited that man had learnt from bitter experience the necessity for government and communal agreement to be protected by the state or '*Leviathan*' (Kelly, 1992: 212-213). Since the foundation of the 'New Police' in 1829, they have been the central providers of that security, by resorting to, or threatening (however subtly) to, use force on civilians.

Yet almost all those upon whom the police are committing violent acts, do not consent to those actions. In many cases they do not even consider the police to have a legitimate role in resolving the dispute which has ended in their arrest (Cameron, 1981; Morash and Robinson, 2002; Bowling and Phillips, 2003; Waddington, 2007). Policing, on this analysis, is thus a business which is inherently messy and one in which some party to any dispute is likely to be unhappy with the outcome. The situation cannot always remain 'win-win'. In order to get around the discomfort a society faces in admitting the difficulties inherent in the existence of body of people who are legitimately allowed resolve disputes using violence, there have developed a number of complex circumlocutions to diffuse this unpleasant reality. These 'myths of policing' include notions of 'constabulary independence', the citizen's power of arrest because the police constable is not an insidious agent of state control, but merely a citizen in uniform and the idea that the constable is a servant of the law and not the state. According to Klockars (1988) community policing is just another such circumlocution. How can community policing ever really provide all the answers and make every member of the community happy? The simple answer is, it cannot. Somebody will always be 'othered' and this is part of the process of forming and solidifying the identity of the community itself.

However, it is clear from these discussions that the implementation of a policing strategy such as community policing (which is the basic premise upon which neighbourhood policing is based) involves working in a complex social environment, with numerous exceptionally subjective notions. These highly subjective notions include the very concepts of 'community' and 'policing' themselves. Defining what it is the police are trying to do with neighbourhood policing is a tricky and political

operation, and one which is muddled by the uncertainty of the basic conceptual tenets upon which the operation is based. Similarly, as discussed in chapter 2, measuring the outcome of neighbourhood policing operations is not straightforward. Even if it could be simply measured in terms of reducing crime, the ongoing criminological task of 'quantifying' the 'amount' of 'crime' is beset with major epistemological difficulties (Maguire, 2007). The project of introducing neighbourhood policing is variously described as having many objectives (chapter 1). It should increase consultation within a neighbourhood in order to define and tailor the policing response to the demands of that neighbourhood. This will help reduce individual fear of crime within the neighbourhood and provide reassurance to members of the public. In so doing, it will increase the democratic accountability of the police and thus increase the legitimacy of the police. This increased legitimacy will make it easier for the police to function in neighbourhoods that have been harder to reach out to. Increasing the outreach capability of the police will increase the amount of intelligence that they can garner from such 'hard to reach' groups and perhaps help prevent terrorism. Thus local level success and connections can have an impact on the security of the entire nation.

It is clear that this is a large set of objectives for one policing strategy to have. Measuring the success of a strategy with such a large number of possible options for success (and an equally large number of options for failure) is thus a complicated affair. Some options may be in direct conflict with each other. For example, in a neighbourhood with traditionally poor relations with the police, increasing preventive patrols and stop and searches might reduce the reported amount of crime, yet completely erode relations between the police and local members of the public. In

other circumstances, the damage to police credibility by fighting small scale anti-social behaviour could be too much to accept if it were to completely destroy any chance of getting useful intelligence for the purposes of fighting larger scale criminal activity. Struggling to balance the aims and objectives of neighbourhood policing may sometimes feel more like an ongoing political negotiation towards a mutually least disagreeable, though ultimately unattainable, settlement, than like a carefully implemented social policy. This experience is borne out by the observations made in this research.

The Thames Valley Police (TVP) co-funded the present research into the problems of measuring outcomes in neighbourhood policing. The research began in 2005 when the policy of neighbourhood policing was in its infancy in the force and around England and Wales. The project was allowed virtually unfettered access to the force and the process of rolling out neighbourhood policing across the constabulary. The issues that arise from these unusual circumstances (police funding academic research in such a fashion) are discussed further in chapter 3, which also goes into more details of how the research was conducted. The research was primarily an ethnography of the roll-out of neighbourhood policing which observed a large number of NAGs in four separate neighbourhoods, though focussing mostly on two case study neighbourhoods, known as Neighbourhoods A and B.

Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs) are non-statutory bodies formed in each of the neighbourhoods in the BCU that was studied. Each NAG is attended by the neighbourhood police officer for the neighbourhood, any PCSOs who are assigned to the neighbourhood and a set of stakeholders who may have an interest in the co-

production of community safety within the neighbourhood. There is no prescribed formula of who must attend a NAG for it to be an effective or operational NAG. Each member of the NAG is expected to sign the constitution of the NAG and agree to abide by its principals. The constitution is not strictly prescribed and can be altered to suit the needs of any particular neighbourhood.

NAGs meet monthly to work on problem-solving the priority problems of their neighbourhood. They work within the problem-solving structures set out by the TVP such as the Problem Analysis Triangle (PAT) and the Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment (SARA) techniques. How the NAGs operate is the subject of the ethnographic research presented here. That they are not consistently constituted and work in different ways in different neighbourhoods is the subject of discussion in the following chapters.

Alongside this ethnography of NAGs, a number of TVP and partner agency training days along with a number of intelligence briefings were also observed. In order to try and broaden the research and to understand the perspectives of NAG participants, a number of interviews were conducted with key participants, such as NAG chairs, police managers, and agency representatives. The data collected are set out and discussed in chapters 4 to 7. The choice of NAGs as a central research focus was made because the NAG is a relatively new development and is central to a number of the aims of neighbourhood policing.

A NAG is an opportunity for some local residents to work alongside other local stakeholders and local government agencies as well as the police to try and solve problems

which are specific to their areas. The NAG, according to the police themselves is the problem-solving entity within neighbourhood policing (and this is discussed in more detail in chapter 7). It is also a central location for the interaction of numerous agencies concerned with providing social and other services to members of the public within a neighbourhood. The NAG is not only a problem-solving group, but also a location for partnership and collaboration and this partnership is central to attaining success in almost any of the possible areas in which neighbourhood policing hopes to have an impact. The NAG is thus central to the collaborative approach of neighbourhood policing, the very essence of what it is that makes neighbourhood policing different. If neighbourhood policing is to be more than 'old policing wine in new policing bottles' it is going to have to mark out that difference by utilizing effective collaboration and problem-solving to tailor bespoke interventions for problems as they are perceived by local 'publics'. Understanding the NAG is thus central to understanding neighbourhood policing.

In a world that is moving swiftly away from a centralized nation-state focussed form of 'policing' towards a more diversified and fragmented collection of approaches to policing, there is some degree of uncertainty as to the future role of the state police. It is within this 'plural policing' that any new policing strategy will have to operate (Jones and Newburn, 2006b). Operating in the pluralized policing environment is beginning to be considered by some theorists as a form of 'security network' (Crawford, 2006a; Wood and Shearing, 2007). Policing in this model is one form of providing, or attempting to provide, security. Policing is no longer the start and end of security provision as it would be in the era of the Hobbesian *Leviathan*. Within these networks there are numerous 'nodes' of security governance. This vast market place

of security provision has been increasing in size and diversity for many years (Shearing and Stenning, 1983; Shearing, 1992), to the point where there are now many voices in the discourse of security provision. Each of these nodes or voices interacts with one another in various degrees of harmony and discord. Some nodes will have agendas which they see as being of great public importance (for example agencies concerning themselves with so-called national security), while others will simply be trying to increase their own sense of security (such as a neighbourhood watch group) or indeed trying to make a profit (for example a private security company). Each node works within a framework of security provision which affects how effective it can be. This work looks at the NAG as a node of security governance and discusses some of the forces and issues that arise from its place within that network of security governance.

In order for a NAG to begin the process of problem-solving, it must first define what its priority problems are to be. This takes place through a process of consultation which was observed in the case study of Neighbourhood B (chapter 4), which decided to focus mainly on anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood. However, this process of definition (as discussed in chapter 7) faces twin challenges which this research has identified as the problems of political definition and the problems of administrative definition. The problem of political definition is in essence the problem of consulting with the 'community' or the 'public' to find out which problems it is that they would like the NAG to solve. The problem of administrative definition focuses on the practical or hands-on definition of the problem which a NAG or other node of security governance will use to approach the construction of a suitable intervention in order to try to solve the problem. Thus in the case of Neighbourhood B, the problem was

politically defined as 'anti-social behaviour' through the use of public meetings and other forms of consultations such as questionnaires. However the practicalities of creating an administrative definition of what anti-social behaviour actually is for the purposes of trying to solve it, proved to be more controversial. The research produced evidence of substantial disagreement between NAG attendees about how to define anti-social behaviour and this naturally had an impact on what the NAG could attempt to do about it. Anti-social behaviour was also the focus of the two main problems focussed on by the NAG in the second case study area, Neighbourhood A (chapter 5). The NAG in that neighbourhood chose to work on the problems of anti-social behaviour associated with garages which had been built at the same time, but separate from, the council housing stock in the neighbourhood. While this comes under the banner of anti-social behaviour, it is an unusual example of problem-solving and is certainly unique amongst the NAGs in the same Basic Command Unit (BCU).

While the biggest issue for problem-solving may be deciding and precisely pinpointing the problem itself, this research also identified five other main types of problem faced by NAGs in constructing effective interventions to try and solve problems. The first are the '*teething*' problems which are often associated with the early stages of a new policy initiative. For example, Neighbourhood A was a pilot neighbourhood for the roll out of the neighbourhood policing in the BCU and this appeared to help it get started more easily as there was more police and agency time to spend on it and more at stake in its success. In comparison, Neighbourhood B, which started out as a NAG much later, had substantial difficulties getting going. For example there were difficulties getting some potential stakeholders, particularly the private housing agency to attend. 'Teething' problems lead neatly into *timeframe*

problems because in the early stages of a NAG's development there is often an urgency to demonstrate results. This goes beyond merely the 'teething' phase however. The more difficult problems that require the long term implementation of interventions are naturally slow to demonstrate results. This delay requires a confidence that something will come of the NAG's work but can lead to a parallel desire to achieve 'quick wins' over smaller projects, to maintain the public perception that a NAG is doing something and that it is in some way useful to its public. Measuring these results however, is an exceptionally difficult thing to do. Partially for the reasons just mentioned, that success is so clearly in the eye of the beholder, but also because there are difficult methodological problems with trying to measure success. Every NAG faces *problems of evaluation* which, notwithstanding the best efforts of police managers in attempting to formalize methods of evaluation, successfully finding out if your intervention is working is a difficult, and potentially politically fraught operation.

While the NAGs studied in this research are relatively new, as indeed is the very concept of a NAG, it is clearly the intention of central government and senior police management that neighbourhood policing and the NAG are here to stay and will become part of the 'greater police family'. This raises the *problem of sustainability*. Keeping NAGs going takes a certain amount of skill and drive which may not be present in each local area's representatives or other NAG members. This is compounded by the *problem of ownership*, where due to the infrequency of individual NAG meetings and the plurality of similar meetings many partnership agencies have to attend, there can be difficulties in getting NAG members to actually ensure that the commitments they make are followed through. There was observed a sense of

‘voluntarism’ to the work of many of the attendees, and when this foundered, progress towards the NAG’s objectives also slowed down. Sustaining a functioning NAG which can operate as an effective node of governance is a challenging operation.

This challenge is perhaps most difficult because the NAG operates as a forum for the interaction of partnership agencies, not all of whom have the same work habits or motivations, but all of whom have to collaborate within the ‘node’ in order to try to reduce crime or solve one of the NAG’s other priority problems. Chapter 6 looks at the ways in which this partnership has operated in the case study neighbourhoods and discusses this in light of the literature on the co-production of community safety by agencies working in partnership. For the police in particular, this type of partnership working can cause a tension between the local demands and their centrally mandated targets which may not be directly related to the NAG’s priority problems. Other agencies may suffer from problems in that their main objectives will be something which is not directly related to issues traditionally associated with the project of ‘policing’. Housing agencies, for example do not necessarily consider themselves an important battalion in the ‘war on crime’. Some are motivated by the desire simply to provide the best possible housing to clients, those in the private sector will be driven by the desire to turn a profit. Not all agencies have the reduction of crime, fear of crime or anti-social behaviour as their primary motivation. This can lead to the other key problem associated with partnership working, the risk of criminalizing social policy and ‘youth’. In obliging agencies to work together on the question of crime or anti-social behaviour there is a very real risk that this can alter their focus away from other social policy goals such as poverty reduction or increased standards of education. If the discourse of social policy shifts in such a way as to see social policy

failings (or to be more optimistic, social policy ‘challenges’) solely in the light of their criminogenic effect, there is a temptation not to consider these challenges as ends which in themselves are worthy of consideration. This sort of vision of the criminogenic qualities of social policy issues can be seen in this research in the discourse about ‘youth’ and the many problems that they cause in the case study neighbourhoods. Although the problems are largely of anti-social behaviour rather than crime per se, the fact that the group of people who are being created as the ‘other’ are the nebulous class of people known as ‘youths’ and ‘young people’. While it is clear that there are many problems facing young people in contemporary society, it seems that trying to deal with these challenges using the blunt tool of the criminal justice system and other nodes of security governance, tends in the direction of framing the problems of contemporary adolescence as a ‘problem of crime’.

This research has looked at the development of a ‘new’ technique of policing at the earliest stages of its development and describes the problems that it has encountered as it has tried to ‘bed in’ as a programme that is here to stay. There has not been much academic research on this new format of policing, which is experiencing sustained attention from government and politicians and it is fair to say that, as yet, there has been no academic study of the NAG and its work as a problem-solver or as a co-producer of community safety. In so doing, this research has attempted to describe the role of the NAG within its neighbourhood specifically and within neighbourhood policing more generally, as a node connected up to a broad network of security governance. Neighbourhood policing draws not just upon the established strategies of ‘community policing’ but also tries to merge it with problem-oriented policing and intelligence-led policing to provide a bespoke policing service to each neighbourhood

in England and Wales. How much it can achieve will be influenced by the success of NAGs up and down the jurisdiction as NAGs are the central point where all three of these strategies meet. It may even be said that without the NAG, neighbourhood policing is just policing.

Chapter 1

What is Neighbourhood Policing and Where Has It Come From?

Neighbourhood policing did not simply 'appear' on the streets of Britain in 2004 as a discrete and isolated policy initiative to resolve the issues of crime and social order in the nation's neighbourhoods. It is the result of much complex history and development in the process of 'policing' and long term efforts to produce social order or control. This chapter looks at some of the notions upon which it is based such as 'policing', community', 'neighbourhood' and 'community policing'. It is argued here that these notions are slippery to define and as a result can leave those working with them a lot of discretion as to what they mean and how to apply them. Throughout almost all work on neighbourhood policing, practitioners (and indeed academics) must use these terms as best they can and this can lead to conceptual instability in the application of the policy processes of neighbourhood policing.

Within those policy processes there are specific strategies, the two most prominent of which are problem-oriented policing (POP) and intelligence-led policing (ILP). These distinct approaches are brought together in neighbourhood policing and for that reason the theory behind these strategies is discussed here as it is important for understanding the empirical data which is discussed in later chapters. How these approaches are applied can lead to substantial claims for their success as was the case with the reduction in recorded crime in New York City in the 1990s. This story, which claims to be one of a victory for a pro-actively applied community policing approach is therefore of relevance to the police manager in Britain. Not least because of the common practice of transferring policing policies from the US to the UK. It is

argued that the 'New York story' is one, not of 'community policing' as it is commonly understood, but of 'zero-tolerance policing', a heavy-handed approach to policing both minor and more serious crimes in the city. It is relevant to neighbourhood policing firstly because it tries to palm itself off as a form of 'community policing' (ie Commissioner Bratton seeks to use the term community to give his tactics a more 'feel-good' appeal) and because its claims of success may not be as breathtaking as they initially appear. Not everyone who says they are doing community policing is, nor should everyone who claims to be 'beating crime' be believed.

Finally, the chapter ends by discussing the proliferation of private policing that has taken place in the UK (and other post-industrial democracies) in the latter part of the Twentieth Century. It is within this mixed economy of policing that neighbourhood policing must set out its stall. Many of those who will benefit from neighbourhood policing will also be able to access other forms of security provision and it is a constant challenge for the public police to remain relevant and egalitarian in how they provide their policing service.

'Policing'

'Policing' and 'the police' are broad and imprecise terms which cover a variety of meanings. 'Policing' at its broadest conception covers all actions conducted in order to bring people in line with some perceived normal way of behaving. Such actions can be by almost anybody. From police officer to parent, professor to peer, every form of social behaviour has some sort of norms which are 'policed' in some fashion by somebody.

'Policing' was taking place long before the foundation of the Metropolitan Police (the 'Met') in London in 1829. Although the creation of the Met is often taken as a starting point for modern policing it is fair to say that in fact the Met amounted merely to a formalization of policing techniques that had been going on in England for years, such as the work of night watchmen and entrepreneurial thief-takers. The Met are often described as the 'new police' in the sense that they were a paid, organized, group of pro-active crime fighters. Yet the constables and watchmen of the eighteenth century also fit into these categories. The Met's novelty appears to be something of a myth. Styles goes so far as to say that 'in many ways the most striking distinguishing feature of the "new" police is that they were presented and perceived as something *new*' (1987: 19).

Prior to 1829 however, the British Empire was employing overt police forces to maintain control over its colonies as well as over Ireland. The colonial dimension is often forgotten when discussing the development of the 'new police'. It has been argued that this is because:

Ethnocentricity, inadequate comparative knowledge of policing, and a-historicism are the hallmarks of the Anglo-American sociology of the police. ... The failure to consider the wider contours of the emergence of the professional police has been near-total.' (Brogden, 1987: 4)

The demand for a government run police force did not materialise from nowhere. It can be seen as part of a reaction to growing concerns about the 'dangerous classes' of

urban poor drawn together in the rapidly expanding cities (Silver, 1967; Graham and Clarke, 1996). For some, these 'dangerous classes' were seen almost as threatening as the colonial subjects of the empire. Robert Peel, the architect of the Met, drew heavily on his experience as Chief Secretary of Ireland where he had established the Peace Preservation Force in 1814 (Emsley, 2001: 20).

The development of policing and police forces depends on the social and political climate of the time and location in which it operates. As an inherently political institution, a police force has to represent some sort of settlement or, failing an agreement on how policing should take place, it becomes an enforced settlement. The Peace Preservation Force, created by Peel when he was Chief Secretary for Ireland may have provided some inspiration for the creation of the Met but the Irish and English policing experiences were divergent. The contemporary debates about the foundation of the Met were laden with worries about, and concerns to prevent, the formation of a centralized police force like that in France. Meanwhile, the Irish force itself morphed into the 'gendarmerie-style Royal Irish Constabulary' (Emsley, 2001: 20). While the London force became a model for 'policing by consent', the Irish force became a paradigm colonial police force. Right up to its conversion to the control of the Irish Free State (McNiffe, 1997), it was used to train officers for duties across the Empire (Brewer, 1990; Herlihy, 1997).

While the colonial policing model may have enforced law down on to the subservient colonial subject, the Met was to be a model for policing one's own. In many ways the most interesting thing about the formation of the Met is not the question of how new or groundbreaking the force actually was, but the debate that took place surrounding

its formation. Unlike in Ireland (or indeed Palestine or India) where the colonists imposed policing, the Met was created by a democracy (albeit a partial democracy) as an organization that would police 'itself', or at least police the streets in which those forming 'itself' would themselves use. To fill the streets of London with a corps of men paid to enforce order required a number of provisos to be in place. At the end of the debate, upon the Met's foundation, England had created for itself a number of 'myths of the police'. These carry through to this day, although their often threadbare form makes some of them seem anachronistic.

The 'myths of policing' are in effect a form of denial. They help society sugar-coat the fact that the existence of a body whose central role is the maintenance of order (Ericson, 1982) through the threat or use of force (Bittner, 1990), can be seen as an embarrassment to our society. The police are, to use Reiner's term, a 'regrettable necessity';

This has always been the status of the police in even the most pacific and law-abiding countries. For the most part, the fashionable languages of managerialism, community and consumerism overlook the fact that policing is not about the delivery of an uncontentious service like any other. Their business is the messy and intractable one of regulating social conflict. (Reiner, 2000a: 215)

To cover over these uncomfortable facts, there are the myths. The myths include the idea that the police officer is merely a citizen in uniform who is only patrolling the streets with the same power to arrest someone (ie to use force) as any other citizen.

This myth prevails to this day. Although police officers' powers of arrest have increased relative to those of the citizen (Hooper and Ormerod, 2007: 1172-1181), the possibility of citizen's arrest remains (Fairweather, 2005: 108). This was considered a method of displaying the fact that the new police constable was no more violent than a normal citizen. There is not so much a finite list of myths as there are cultural understandings of the police and their actions. Some of the myths are straightforward and relatively obvious, the police constable would be in a blue uniform not a green uniform as this would demonstrate that he was different to the army, who had been used to brutally put down civil unrest in the past; the City of London maintained its own constabulary in order to assert its traditional independence from the rest of the metropolis, a myth of territorial control and power which is now largely anachronistic as the City of London Police work so closely with the Met. When the constabularies were rolled out to the provinces, this control question became an issue again. Accountability and control of police forces continue to be thorny issues to this day (and are discussed further below), but one way of assuaging fears of a centralized police force was to have smaller local constabularies. One of the great worries about developing a central police force was that very centralization. This, it was feared would lead to a French style 'gendarmerie' which could be most easily controlled by the ruling powers. The localized constabulary model was constructed in response to these fears (Emsley, 2001). These constabularies have merged together over the years, now totalling only forty-three (Mawby, 2003). Even this level of diverse centres of policing now seems somewhat old-fashioned as the trend towards national centralization of control continues (Newburn, 2007; Neyroud, 2007).

Perhaps the most famous myth of policing is that of ‘constabulary independence’, an idea that the police owe their allegiance not to the government but to the law and would apply it as best they could, regardless of the interests of the government or other powerful entities. This myth is plainly ridiculous, despite the appealing idea of a body with such power acting in a judicious and carefully balanced manner, free from political influence. There may be degrees of independence, but it is clear that the police are under the control of central government to a large extent. One need only consider the vast numbers of instructions, audits and fund-dependent targets that emanate from central government to make the idea of constabulary independence difficult to believe in. (Savage *et al.*, 2000; Wilson *et al.*, 2001). The myth was seriously tested during the miners’ strike of the early 1980’s when the Thatcher Government put serious pressure on Chief Constables to police the strike forcefully.

Reiner also notes some other characteristics of the ‘new police’ which assisted in their struggles for legitimacy after their foundation and into the Twentieth Century. These notions have been the subject of much contestation, but they are undoubtedly part of how the police in Britain are conceptualized. They include the notions that the police are a bureaucratic organization (rather than an assortment of ‘entrepreneurial thief-takers’), are beholden to the rule of law, adopt a strategy of minimal force, are not involved in partisan politics and provide a service for the public (2000a: 51-58).

The myths of policing also apply to individual tactics of policing such as community policing. As discussed below, Klockars has argued that community policing is merely a new rhetorical device which ‘is best understood as the latest in a fairly long tradition of circumlocutions whose purpose it is to conceal, mystify, and legitimate police

distribution of nonnegotiable coercive force' (Klockars, 1988). On this analysis, the myths of policing continue to apply to contemporary policing tactics, including community policing.

Eras, Cycles and Waves of Policing

The history of policing does not stand still. For the moment, it seems that community policing is to be the order of the day in England and Wales. This focus on one form or style of policing will no doubt change as the police move on to another style or strategy. This section looks at some of the ways policing can be conceived of as changing over time.

Policing and the police are constantly evolving. Where the process of community policing fits into that evolution is sometimes hard to tell. Efforts to predict the future of the police and policing are regularly made by criminologists and other commentators, but most admit they are on shaky foundations attempting to presage the policing response to social change that may be regional, national, global or 'merely' local (Newburn, 2003). It may in fact merely be a step in a cyclical process rather than a true sea-change. This section will briefly look at three possible ways to describe or analyse the changes in policing, as eras, as cycles and as waves. None is necessarily perfect but each sheds its own light on how policing changes and where community policing fits into it.

Eras

Kelling and Moore (1988) describe the evolution of police styles in the United States from the foundation of formal policing in that jurisdiction. They classify the

development as having three distinct stages, or eras; the political era, from the foundation of policing until the end of the 1900s, the reform era, up until the end of the 1970s, and the community problem-solving era from then until the present day. To summarize broadly; in the political era the police were appointed by local politicians and were not as distinct from the political process as their British counterparts. As a result they became an extension of the powers of political office. It was against this background and the corruption that resulted from it that the philosophies of the reform era began to emerge.

The reform era was all about professionalizing the police force. In time it began to take advantage of all available technological advances to become speedy responders to the immediate demands of citizens. Police were, or at least saw themselves as, simply reactive professionals who responded to the needs of citizens as problems arose. They were not controlled by the politicians who appointed them but were professionals in their own right.

The professional era developed problems of its own however. In trying to be efficient crime fighters, police officers and managers became caught up in measuring their success in terms of response times and other bureaucratic measures. As a result, they spent more time in cars, less time on the beat and citizens began to see, meet and talk to police officers less regularly. They may have responded faster than ever, but they were only there when there was a crisis, and one that was serious enough to inspire somebody to call the police. A cop in a car may have been on the same side of the street as you, but to law abiding citizens and criminals alike, police officers were in an air-conditioned world of their own.

It is from this background of detachment that the police began to realise they were losing their legitimacy. The reform era was beginning to lose its connection with the people it was policing. In both the United States and Britain, police forces were increasingly policing minority communities in a style designed by those in the majority and executed by officers from a majority background. As social change moved quickly from the peak of 'consensus policing' in the 1950's, the police were slow to change to keep up. The very source of their legitimacy, their connection to the people they policed had been eroded, if not lost completely. In the early 1980's, riots in Brixton and other urban centres demonstrated that the police had lost touch with those they policed and altered public perceptions of the police (Bowling and Foster, 2002; Waddington, 2007). Community policing, as a police strategy, seeks to rebuild the legitimacy that the police had lost as a result of their drift from the community (Tilley, 2003).

This delineation of eras is clearly imperfect. It is perhaps difficult to sustain when applied across the wide variety of cities and indeed social worlds in which police forces operate in the United States. It is perhaps even harder to relate it to England and Wales. As discussed above, there was a large national debate about the formation of the Metropolitan Police. There was also a considerable resentment of the police among the working classes as they saw the police as a tool of the upper and middle classes to control them (Robinson and Scaglione, 1987; Reiner, 2000a).

Cycles

Zedner (2006) argues that the creation of the 'new police' in 1829 did not in fact mark the beginning of a seachange in policing techniques. She argues that any later claims, up to the present day, of great changes need to be treated sceptically.

According to the Met there is a cycle to policing which rotates between the two poles of enforcement focused policing and community focussed policing. This 'policing cycle' can be described as the process of moving from one pole to another and back in response to perceived over-emphasis on either crime fighting or neighbourhood connection. For example, after priority crime (crime to which traditional response policing techniques are applied, such as assault, burglary etc) falls following a period of strong enforcement efforts. there is then a call for greater visibility and for the police to tackle lower level crime. At this point they are driven to take up a community focus. The cycle continues as this is welcomed and applauded. However a community focus causes resources to be focussed on community at the expense of priority crimes. While detection rates fall in priority crimes, media criticisms mount on the police's performance, they promise to correct failings and due to this political criticism, often during election campaigns, the police are brought back to an enforcement focus (Metropolitan Police, 2005: 4).

If this cycle were to continue indefinitely, then inevitably the current wave of neighbourhood policing would come to an end. However, it may be a macro indication of how successful the neighbourhood policing initiative has been if it has taken longer for the cycle to return to an emphasis on response policing. If, as is often

argued by police managers, neighbourhood policing is here to stay, then the cycle would be broken, or the divergence of the poles reduced substantially.

Waves

Another way of looking at these changes is to consider each 'new' policing phase as not a distinct period, which can be neatly delineated from the previous period, but as a 'wave' of policing. In the same way that a wave at sea builds behind the wave in front before breaking on the shore, a wave of policing is linked inextricably to the wave in front of it, and even after it has crashed and dissipated, it has influenced the wave behind. As Wood and Shearing put it:

Some waves emerge as an extension of ideas introduced through other waves, while other waves emerge as a consequence of resistance to established ways of thinking. Through an analysis of waves in the realm of public policing we aim to enhance our understanding of how public policing has been and is being re-imagined, as well as the conditions that have allowed for these imaginings to come into and out of view (2007: 35).

This analogy allows the changes which take place in approaches to policing to be viewed as a more fluid process. Unlike Kelling and Moore's 'eras' approach (above), the waves of policing analysis allows for each new approach to be considered in light of how it relates to the last and next waves, along with how it relates to waves that may still be active in the present. Wood and Shearing (ibid: chapter 2) identify a number of waves of policing which have developed and influenced one another:

- Policing as community-based
- Policing as solving problems
- The influence of neo-liberalism
- Policing as restorative justice
- Policing as fixing broken windows
- Policing as intelligence work
- Policing as reassurance

Although there is insufficient space to discuss each of these waves in depth here, many of the core themes of the waves are discussed in the first two chapters of this work. This is because they are influential to the operation of neighbourhood policing. This influence, from many different waves of policing is indicative of the fact that while neighbourhood policing may be seen to be a 'new departure', it is clear that it is heavily influenced by other waves of policing practice. In locating the place of neighbourhood policing as a new development, it is suggested that a 'waves-based' analysis is the most useful.

There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, the concept of the 'wave', unlike the 'era', does not create a finite historical period within which all policing acted as one simple style. Such construction of historical eras is often forced and artificial (Arnold, 2000). The 'waves-based' analysis allows for the new approaches to policing to be conceptualized as developing a sort of momentum, gathering their political power and support slowly and then sweeping over the previous wave at varying degrees of speed, depending on the numerous factors involved. Neighbourhood policing did not just

appear from nowhere, it became possible as a response to previous considerations and finally, after careful planning reached the streets. When could one say that such an era began? Would it not be better to consider it a policing 'wave' which gathered force and swept into prominence? It is for these reasons that it is submitted that the 'waves-based' approach is the most useful for understanding neighbourhood policing.

What Are 'Community' and 'Neighbourhood' in a Policing Context?

'Community' and 'neighbourhood' are two words that are used by scholars and practitioners in the field of policing. The terms however are ambiguous and difficult to define, but these ambiguities are important to discuss because they lie at the heart of the symbolism and meaning of 'community policing'.

Community

The word 'community' is ubiquitous. A Google search of the term produces 1.32 billion hits. With so many people using it, one would hope that it would be an easy term to define, that somewhere among these billions of users there would be a consensus. Notions of 'community' however, are inherently difficult to define. On the face of it, a 'community' is a straightforward entity, we all live in one and think we can describe what that is. The phrase is invoked repeatedly in social policy discussions for numerous purposes. However when efforts are made to try and tie down what exactly a community is, it becomes virtually impossible to come up with a definition that fits all or even most of the uses of the term.

It is perhaps because it is so nebulous that it is so popular. Because we think we know what a community is, we think we aspire to being part of one. 'Community' invokes a

sense of well being and unity, a sense of togetherness and commonality among a group of people. A community can be an *end* in itself or a *means* to achieve some other policy goal such as crime reduction (Lacey and Zedner, 1995: 303). Wrapped up in notions of community is a cohesiveness and unitary identity that is perhaps lacking in the late-modern metropolis. Yet the myth that community was something abundant in pre-industrial times is perhaps coloured by nostalgic yearnings.

Contrary to popular myth, the inhabitants of England before the Industrial Revolution did not live in idyllic village settlements. The early modern small town or village was as likely to be riven by problems, albeit of a different nature, as any modern city. Legal records, criminal and civil alike, contain ample evidence of social tensions and interpersonal malice. Indeed, by the end of the eighteenth century most English villages, although capable of showing community spirit on occasion, were often so socially stratified as to make it possible to speak of a number of 'communities' within their boundaries. (Sharpe, 1996: 126)

Community is a concept which presents positive images of harmony, solidarity cooperation and friendliness. Nobody could be against it. It is for this reason that community, as a discourse, is appealing. It suggests to us something that we think we had in the past, something we think we liked and we think we would like it again to help solve our problems. While it was complex and disparate in the pre-modern village, it is perhaps more complicated in the late-modern city. Despite these problems with understanding what 'community' is, it is clear that notions of

community are becoming more and more important in the provision of social services (including policing):

Community has become an increasingly significant focus of governance arrangements in the UK, reflected in the decentralisation of public services and the increasing expectations of participation, consultation and involvement of communities and neighbourhoods. There is significant overlap between governmental and popular orientations, since community exists as the site of potent popular identifications and desires – for attachment, belonging, order and security, at least. It remains a profoundly unstable term – conceptually, socially and governmentally. (Clarke *et al.*, 2007: 141)

This governmental instability is a challenge for any organization using community as a focus for providing its services. The conceptual instability can also be clearly viewed when we try to identify what community means to us. If we ask ourselves ‘what is the community to which I belong?’ we are likely to produce very subjective answers. Some might say family, others their friends from school, university or work, others prefer to form communities by race, nationality, religion or other hobby. There are local communities, homeless communities, Muslim communities, Irish communities, online communities, travelling communities, business communities, immigrant communities and an almost endless list of other groupings that could be considered a community. The common theme appears to be that they are in some way tied by a common bond; a ‘commonality’ of some form.

Geography does not seem to be the most important part of that bond. In today's world of cheap flights and global communication, a community can be international without much difficulty. Similarly, while a community can have a widely disparate group of members, an individual can be a member of a disparate group of communities. A community is a loose reference to some sort of group that subjectively defines itself or is perhaps defined by an outsider or agency. It could be defined by inclusion or exclusion. The term sets out no criteria for membership nor constitution for administration, a community can literally be any group of people, or even virtual people.

Policy debates on criminal justice constantly refer to community or communities as if they are tangible things that can be worked on, with, or for. Something from which opinions can be obtained and whose sensitivities can be gauged and assuaged. Within these references is an implicit assumption that a community can be defined or divined. References to the community, however fuzzily that community is delineated, are considered to carry an extra weight, as if a policy with some reference to 'community' brings with it an inherent mandate. As Lacey and Zedner put it:

The existence of communities is assumed without their contours ever being delineated. Equally importantly, community has an inevitably (but not invariably) ideological loading: it evokes a cluster of values – solidarity, reciprocity, mutuality, connection, care, sharing. Significantly, political discourses of community are generally characterized by a slippage between ideological and institutional reference points; and the slippage significantly affects the meaning of these discourses. In other

words, the assertion of a practice as 'community-based' not only implies a particular institutional framework, but also carries with it a certain normative force. (1995: 302)

It is to this normative force that community policing aspires. By connecting policing to the community, there is the possibility of democratizing and legitimizing the process of policing. Klockars (1988) has argued that this is merely a method of painting over the inherently unpleasant facets of policing by appealing to notions of community. Nonexistent and uninterested communities make perfect partners for policing because 'while they lend their moral and political authority as communities to what police do in their name, they have no interest in and do not object to anything that might be done.' By this rationale community policing is another example of one of the 'myths of policing'.

By stating that communities are involved in policing, the police or policy maker is co-opting the 'community' into the provision of security. The community now becomes responsible for its own security. This process of 'responsibilization' is an implicit admission that the state has failed in its efforts to provide security for its citizens. It is an inherent admission of the limitations of state-centred policing. This process is an example of the achievements of the neo-liberal policy maker in co-opting the citizen to be in fact an individual responsible for their own security. Citizens and communities are given the autonomy to act as consumers (in this case consumers of security) and in so doing become responsible for their own security or lack thereof. Conjuring up notions of community as co-producers of security creates communities as self-regulating entities. Community as a discourse could in fact be hiding a sinister

move towards individualism. As Clarke argues; 'The movement from expansive or welfarist liberalism to advanced or neo-liberalism is characterized by this shift towards the production of self-regulating subjects' (2005: 452).

Neighbourhood

If communities are so intangible, perhaps policing can be better anchored to some sort of geographical entity, a 'beat', a 'neighbourhood' or even a 'force area'. Geography is after all easy to define and easy to pin down. This may be the case in theory, but in practice 'neighbourhoods' can be tricky to decide on for similar reasons to communities.

Neighbourhoods bring a similarly complex set of subjective feelings to those inspired by the term 'community'. Galster describes the problem of conceptualizing 'neighbourhood' in terms that show how it too has been glanced over; 'Urban social scientists have treated "neighbourhood" in much the same way as courts of law have treated pornography: as a term that is hard to define precisely, but everyone knows it when they see it.' (2001: 2111). While it may be possible to agree that there is a spatial dimension to 'neighbourhood', there are also experiential components which make it difficult to clearly mark out discrete areas as neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood is subjectively defined by those who utilize or consume it. The qualities or components of a neighbourhood are constantly changing and the factors that define it can be altered by the very act of using them. Neighbourhood is a collection of complex characteristics, but the unifying fact about the characteristics of neighbourhood is that they are *spatially* based. So while a community can contain

households in Calcutta, Cairo or Copenhagen, a neighbourhood is strictly rooted in a specific location.

Government agencies concede, albeit implicitly, that the definition of 'neighbourhood' is not an easy one to tie down and as a result defers to local 'police, partners and citizens' (Association of Chief Police Officers, 2005; 2006: 18) to decide what community or neighbourhood units it is best to use when organizing neighbourhood policing (Home Office, 2001, 2005b). Defining neighbourhoods for policing purposes is a difficult process which will be dictated as much by operational and resource implications as by questions of where exactly a neighbourhood or community starts and ends.

Risks of Defining a Community

Defining 'community' or 'neighbourhood' for policing also risks defining who is outside these groups, which can be a dangerous prospect for the police. It risks defining for whom the police work. The description of who the police work for has to be as inclusive as possible and many words that we might use contain difficult symbolic meanings which while attempting to appear inclusive, in fact define a specific group of people with reasonably precise characteristics. The word 'citizen' is a good example. 'Citizen', with its attachment to the idea of the 'good citizen' or the 'law abiding citizen', would seem to provide the perfect group of people to target the services of the state's security governance apparatus. The citizen is the 'public' figure who 'forms the other face of the private figure of the consumer' (Clarke *et al.*, 2007: 3). Citizen however is also a technical term describing someone who is a national of a country, which in a country as diverse as England would leave many people outside

the group, including British subjects, Commonwealth and EU nationals as well as the all too often vilified 'illegal immigrant', all of whom call upon the police and experience their actions and have to be treated with the same humanity and standard of service, regardless of the type of experience they have of the police, or the view the police have of them. Therefore, for the purposes of this work the state police will be described as providing a service to the broadest possible church of potential stakeholders. These are the police's 'public' a group larger than any number of communities, devoid of a requirement of residence or immigration status and encompassing all those who consume police services as victim, suspect, witness, partner, colleague or in any other capacity.

What is Community Policing and What Does it Mean to 'Us'?

When one takes concepts as imprecise as 'community' and 'policing' and put them together, it may be expected that the result will be a doubling of the confusion. However for many practitioners and academics the concept of community policing is relatively straightforward, provided one settles on the idea that a community is definable (or divivable) and accept that the policing is some function of the nation state conducted by a body of state employees. When these positions have been established it is an easy step to understand community policing as connecting the police to the community. Bratton (1998: 15) describes it thus:

[C]ommunity policing is defined by three Ps: Partnership, Problem-Solving, Prevention. Remember in the 1970s and 1980s the police said 'If you give us additional personnel, equipment and resources we'll take care of your problems and control crime.' This didn't happen because there was

no partnership with the community to jointly identify these problems. By working in partnership with the community, other institutions of government and the criminal justice system, police can have a significant impact on crime and disorder. This is the basic premise behind community policing and, when properly applied, it is tougher on crime than anything else we've ever tried.

As discussed above, community policing has to be seen in the context of being in some way a response to the previous reactive/professional approaches to policing. Community policing thus attempts to deal with how people 'want' to be policed. It is all about tailored service provision rather than about reducing the amount of crime, if such an amount can ever be discovered or understood (see the discussion in chapter 2). Community policing can be seen as a tool for reducing crime by gaining more information from the community and by empowering that community. In theory at least, it is more concerned about making sure that people feel less at risk from crime than reducing the actual risk people face of being victimized. Using this understanding, it takes subjective perceptions of crime as its target. The community policeman is not so much a 'crime-fighter' as a 'fear-of-crime-fighter'.

This is part of community policing's inherent criticism of the previous reactive style of policing. If the first criticism is that reactive policing cost the police much of its legitimacy, the second is the implicit acceptance that policing does not have a huge effect on crime levels, as we can currently quantify them (Bayley, 1994). The reform, or professional, era or wave hoped to reduce crime by increasing responsiveness and possibly visibility. The police thus would reduce fear of crime by reducing crime

itself. However, if it is accepted that the police cannot have a huge impact on crime levels, then perhaps their resources are better spent increasing the legitimacy of their work in the community, and reassuring those who fear crime in situations where there is no great risk of victimization.

The appeal of community policing is great. It appears to return the police to the mythical time of consensual policing. Community policing is popular, as Skogan and Hartnet (1998) point out;

[B]ecause it is seen as American as apple pie. Community policing is characterized by 'Officer O'Leary' strolling down the avenue, holding an apple in one hand and twirling a nightstick in the other, shooing away pesky street urchins as he warmly greets passersby. It's the quintessential night watchman or constable who lives in the community he serves.

In short, community policing promises to bring us back to a 'good old days of policing'. However, those good old days were probably not as good as we think they were, especially for minority groups. As Williams and Murphy (1990) point out, the history of policing for African-Americans is far from 'apple pie'.

The British similarly hold a rose-tinted historical image of the police. The 'bobby on the beat' is a national icon. As Loader puts it; 'In perhaps no other country ... has the lowly "village bobby" become so central to the national iconography. And nowhere else has the ordinary beat officer come to be constructed as archetypal national figure

in quite the way he has in England.' For Loader, the bobby is central to the English self-perception and external-representation of itself. This affection for the bobby is evidenced most clearly in the affection shown to the fictional PC Dixon who appeared in an Ealing Studios production *The Blue Lamp* in 1954. Dixon was re-incarnated for a TV series spanning 400 episodes called *Dixon of Dock Green* from 1956-1974. The collective memory of this character is intertwined with the memory of 'a land pre-Commonwealth immigration where "Englishness" was apparently uncomplicated and uncontested' (1997: 15).

The image of Dixon permeates the understanding of, and yearning for the 'Golden Era' of policing. But Dixon and a golden era of policing may have something in common with the bewildering chicken and egg. Which came first? Did the reminiscences of the era create Dixon, or did Dixon's appearance create the nostalgia?

McLaughlin (2005), in unpacking the process by which PC Dixon was portrayed by Ealing Studios' marketing machine, raises the possibility that the dream of a bygone past epitomized by Dixon was a theatrical construction, an 'Ealingization', rather than a reflection of a historical reality. Prior to 1939 the bobby was culturally portrayed as a buffoon. After the war, a number of coincidences contrived to create the atmosphere that made possible Dixon and his legacy in the collective consciousness. The studios needed to keep attendances at the same level as they had been during the war by attempting to tap into the national identity and ensuring films kept their 'traditional' wartime feel. When Ealing Studios began making *The Blue Lamp* the country was in the grips of post-war austerity (rations, red-tape and reconstruction) and a perceived 'crime-wave'. The studios had been making propaganda films during the war, being

under the control of the Ministry of Information, and the script itself was altered by the British Board of Film Classification to ensure that the PC and not the 'spiv' was the hero. The film was well received by the Metropolitan Police and it was well on its way to becoming part of the national consciousness, a position cemented in 1952 when the BBC began its serialization. Indeed it became so iconic that officers formed a guard of honour at the funeral of Jack Warner, the actor who played Dixon. In sum;

[T]he deep cultural and interpretive work of Ealing Studios and the BBC produced, in the form of PC George Dixon, the authoritative black and white image of the 'bobby on the beat' that provided the cultural parameters within which post-war English policing would be understood and debated. (McLaughlin, 2005: 26)

So it may be that the 'bobby on the beat' with his connections in and commitment to the community, which is central to the aspirations of community policing, may be a piece of propaganda the country has spun itself.

In its promise to bring back the good old days, community policing is showing just how vague and inexact it is in both its definitions and its aspirations. It is a broad church with many adherents who are policing their communities in many different ways. It has even been applied to harsh policing techniques that appear to be completely anathema to the reconnection with community and the increase in legitimacy sought by most community policing programmes. William Bratton (1998) used the phrase to describe the type of policing that he introduced along with Rudolph Giuliani in New York City in the 1990's (the example of New York is discussed

further below). However most academics classify that form of policing as problem solving (Moore, 1992; Weisburd *et al.*, 2003), or even 'zero tolerance' policing (Dixon, 1999).

One of the reasons that the concept of community policing is so vague is because of the difficulties of defining who the 'community' receiving the policing service are (again, holding constant the assumption that such a definition can have any meaning). In defining who the community is, a police force is necessarily defining who it is not, who the outsider is. In defining who a community is, a police force is deciding what social order it aspires to maintain and reproduce (Ericson, 1982). In cultures where there is a wide divergence between what different ethnic or religious groups consider to be the preferred order, defining a community can be very political and divisive (Finnane, 1994; Patten Commission, 1999). In one sense, this brings us to a paradox inherent in the concept of community policing. As the police are constantly engaged in fixing conflict, the idea that they can somehow please everyone is, obviously, impossible. In the 'fixing' of any conflict the police will render at least one party to the conflict 'policed' and one party 'fixed'. The order preferred by one party will be maintained. Reiner (2000a: 10) quotes Waddington who says, "community policing" is an oxymoron, for if the police could serve the whole community there would be little point in having a police at all'.

In Britain community policing in its current incarnation is called 'neighbourhood policing'. In order to try and provide some clarity, this work will use the term 'community policing' to refer to the overall theoretical concept, and 'neighbourhood policing' to refer to the current British policy to which this research relates.

Problem-Oriented and Intelligence-Led Policing

Problem-oriented policing (POP) and intelligence-led policing (ILP) are two styles or approaches to policing that have developed in the latter part of the Twentieth Century. They are often considered as distinct forms of policing. This can indeed be helpful, however, there are both problem-oriented and intelligence-led policing strategies used in modern neighbourhood policing. For this reason it is important to briefly set out some to the background and issues around both forms of policing as their role in the neighbourhood policing process will be a recurring theme in this work.

Problem-Oriented policing

Problem-oriented policing, also sometimes called problem-solving policing, originated in the work of Herman Goldstein (1979) in the United States in the 1970s. Goldstein was working during the so-called 'professional era' of policing where response times were prioritized and officers' movements were regimented and managed so as to be most effective. However, it became apparent that the police's time was being spent returning to similar incidents repeatedly and the root causes of those problems were not being addressed by this 'fire brigade' style of policing. The police had become obsessed with how they worked rather than what their impact was. This is what Goldstein called the "means over ends" syndrome'. The logic of POP is that if police officers spend some time working on particular problems and work towards resolving them, police time will be better spent than if they have to continue responding rapidly to each incident for a potentially infinite period of time.

This logic sets POP out as incorporating 'an explicit conception of the nature and role of modern policing' (Tilley, 2003: 317). POP attempts to achieve goals such as creating and maintaining a feeling of security in a community, identifying problems, resolving conflict and controlling conduct which threatens life and property. It does this by working on specific, closely defined problems. POP is ineffective if the problem is as imprecise as 'crime' or 'anti-social behaviour'. For a problem to be usefully considered it must be easily defined and understood. Although POP originated in the US, it has been incorporated into policing in the UK since as far back as 1982 (Leigh *et al.*, 1996: 4).

POP has developed over the years to involve the use of certain tools. The two most significant are the Problem Analysis Triangle (PAT) and the process called SARA or Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment. The PAT is applied to a problem by identifying the perpetrator(s), victim(s) and location(s) in which specific problems occur. If one of these components of the problem is removed, then the problem should disappear, or alter in some way. This appears to use a routine activities approach which posits that crime is caused when a suitable offender and a suitable target cross paths in the absence of a capable guardian (Cohen and Felson, 1979). Thus, removing one of the corners from the triangle should eliminate the existence of the problem.

SARA on the other hand is more of a description of how one goes about the process of problem-solving. It seems remarkably simple to merely scan for problems, analyse the problems you find, respond to them and assess the outcome. However for it to be successful, the problem-solver needs to be precise in their methodology when scanning, strict in their definition of the problem when analyzing, careful and

practical in their response and realistic and objective in their assessment. This is not a simple process. Indeed if it were conducted properly it would be substantially distant from the work a response officer would normally expect to do on a day-to-day basis.

POP is a promising development. Solving the problems before police have to respond to them has a great appeal to it. It appeals because it appears to favour brains over brawn and can be evidence-based in its approach to problems and solution. This somewhat utopian approach begs the question; can problems actually be solved? Indeed, can a problem even be defined with sufficient accuracy to allow a useful PAT to be constructed for it? These are not easy questions to answer, and obviously the answer will vary from problem to problem. The definition of policing 'problems' however, like the definition of crimes themselves, is a political act and it is at this point that the skills and connections of certain groups can be mobilized to portray one party to a dispute as the 'problem' when this might not be so clear cut. Good 'analysis' after the 'scanning' has been completed may be able to take on board the interests of both parties to a dispute before deciding on its 'response'. Nevertheless, the greatest difficulty for POP may be deciding what exactly the problem to be solved is. Problem-solving's biggest problem is the problem itself.

Intelligence-Led Policing

If the police cannot respond to every call and deal with every offence because of the simple enormity of the volume of crime, then at some point resources will need to be targeted. ILP posits that these resources should be targeted based on intelligence that the police have gathered and analysed. It is a homegrown UK process that hopes to ensure that the business of policing is done cleverly and efficiently. It has been stimulated by the Audit Commission with its accountant's eye for numerical

effectiveness and productivity (Tilley, 2003: 321). The idea behind ILP was inspired by, *inter alia*, the restrictions placed on traditional forms of evidence gathering, such as confessions, by the *Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984*; an increase in the technological capacity for surveillance, data analysis and storage; and a belief that the majority of crime is committed by a small persistent group of offenders operating in loose networks whose activities could be disrupted if policing were targetted appropriately (Maguire and John, 2006: 70). If POP uses a rational choice theory to disrupt criminal activity, ILP hopes to convict the pool of criminals and incapacitate them from future crime. ILP is forward looking, not reactive. In a sense, ILP epitomises risk analysis, prediction and reduction.

The National Intelligence Model (NIM) is the central component of ILP in the UK. It has been rolled out in all forty-three forces in England and Wales and is being implemented in Scotland (Tilley, 2008: 383). It operates on interconnecting levels which analyse and interpret information about suspects and crimes. The work of the NIM is complicated by the plurality of the provision of policing services in the UK (and potentially internationally) and thus the large numbers of potential sources of intelligence, not to mention the politics of working together and sharing what could be hard-won information. In a sense the NIM is as much about managing partnership as it is about actually applying intelligence to policing (Sheptycki, 2004: 312). There are three levels to the NIM: level 1 covers local crimes; level 2 involves sharing information about crimes which cross jurisdictional borders, (ie between constabularies) where one force's work on the intelligence data would be geographically circumscribed; level 3 works on serious, organized crime at national level or above (Tilley, 2008: 384).

There is also a 'Tasking and Co-ordination Group' which holds regular 'tactical' meetings to set the agenda for intelligence collection and use. The intelligence upon which ILP works is divided into four types of 'intelligence product'. Each 'product' has a particular use and some interventions may require the use of more than one type of product. In Tilley's words;

Strategic assessments provide a longer-term picture of trends possibly with forecasts for the future and are used to inform priorities and resource allocation. *Tactical assessments* are short term ... *Target profiles* describe offenders and their associates to inform operations against them. *Problem profiles* identify emerging series of offences or offenders. (Tilley, 2003: 322, emphasis as in original.)

What becomes intelligence for the purposes of use as an 'intelligence product' can be wide ranging and could include covert surveillance intelligence as well as information from informants and other contacts.

These methods raise some interesting ethical questions about ILP and 'intelligence' itself. Most obviously, there are strong civil libertarian arguments that the right to respect for private life is seriously curtailed by police surveillance, which technology appears to make more and more invasive all the time. Further human rights arguments arise if such 'intelligence' becomes evidence at trial, which cannot be properly tested or cross-examined. The potential for abuse is massive (Ashby, 2005; Tafada, 2007). Similarly, evidence that comes from informants within the criminal fraternity is

dangerous due to its unreliability and may be proffered for motives entirely inconsistent with police goals. The use of informants brings police into ever closer company with those who one might expect to be the targets of their work, increasing the risk of corruption. This is particularly true of crimes of 'vice' where there is no victim in the traditional sense, such as drug use (Dorn *et al.*, 1992). To obtain information police officers must enter the world of the 'deviant other' and pretend to belong, or befriend someone who knows what is going on. In so doing there can often be some class of a price to be paid. There is a classic problem for those using information from a 'grass', whether in court or merely to inform tactical police resource allocation. They (the 'grass') need an incentive to give the information in the first place and that incentive, if it is at all attractive, gives them a reason to lie. Such incentives to lie are encapsulated by the 'prisoner's dilemma' where police interrogate two co-suspects and attempt to induce each to blame the other (Poundstone, 1993). Any deals struck with the body of people who are supposed to be the subject of policing are destined to provide information that is at the best suspicious.

While POP, ILP and neighbourhood policing are distinct approaches to policing, they are not mutually exclusive. Here they have been discussed as if they are perfectly distinct simply to expose the differences between them. It is important to consider though that they intersect substantially in the operation of plural policing. POP tries to solve problems, ILP draws information from sources cultivated by neighbourhood policing. ILP initiatives may be targetted at specific problems, thus possibly ameliorating them. In sum, they all work simultaneously regardless of what they are called.

New York City – ‘Zero Tolerance’, Its ‘Success’ and the Debate It Inspired

When talking about policing it is hard to ignore the ‘New York story’ of the 1990s. Crime in New York dropped substantially during the period when Republican Mayor Rudolph Giuliani appointed William Bratton to the post of Commissioner of the New York Police Department (NYPD). This was particularly true of the murder rate which fell substantially during Bratton’s tenure. The policing model was built on an attitude of ‘zero tolerance’ towards so-called ‘quality of life’ crimes, the small crimes that sent out the message that crime was tolerated. The classic example given by Commissioner Bratton is that of the ‘squeegee-merchant’, the person who wipes the windows of cars stopped in traffic and expects money in return, perhaps in an intimidatory way. Bratton’s first action on arriving at the NYPD was to clamp down on them (Bratton and Knobler, 1998). The theory being that if a city clamps down on the small crime, the bigger crime will begin to reduce too.

This ‘New York story’ is important in the current research for two reasons. Firstly it is based on the famous ‘broken windows’ theory of Wilson and Kelling (1982) which has had huge currency in criminological theory and debate and has been argued to be the reason why ‘zero tolerance’ policing worked. Indeed Kelling worked closely with Bratton on his policing strategies. The success of this policing model was sold as a perfect example of the potential of good old fashioned policing, particularly by Bratton himself (Bratton, 1998). Secondly, this example of success was a fascinating inspiration to other police and criminal justice professionals around the world and inspired numerous visits to New York to see how it worked, and spawned similar ‘zero tolerance’ policies across the globe (Weisburd *et al.*, 2003). This impact has included some solidarity with the ‘zero tolerance’ agenda in the UK with the then

Home Secretary Jack Straw saying that the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* was to be 'a zero tolerance strategy' (Bowling, 1999). The rhetoric of 'zero tolerance' has resonated far beyond New York City.

Alongside the aggressive policing of misdemeanours, Bratton introduced some new management techniques. The most famous of these being his use of what was called Compstat, a computer data system which was able to retrieve crime data and map it across the city. Parallel to the IT facilities, he decentralized control of local neighbourhoods to the precinct commanders (previously, much crime fighting was conducted by specialized units within the NYPD) and grilled them each week on what they were doing about hot-spots in their precincts. This devolution of power increased morale in the force as did the continuing decline of homicide numbers.

The fairytale in New York needs to be unpicked somewhat however. There are difficult questions of causation which need to be considered when analysing Bratton's success. Kelling and Bratton (1998) have argued that they should be credited entirely with the success in New York because they had been methodical. They had taken a theory ('broken windows'), pre-tested it in the New York subway system (when Bratton was head of the Transit Police Department before he worked at the NYPD) and they applied this theory to the city. Crime fell. That is why '[a]side from the lack of any competing explanations' they believed that policing was the central reason for the fall in crime in New York. The problem with that argument, is that it ignores the fact that there were many competing explanations, not least being the question of what actually caused the drop in crime.

Crime in New York, particularly homicide, and more particularly homicide using guns, was dropping substantially from an all time high in 1991. This drop was occurring and continuing while Bratton was in office from 1994-1996. Bratton was 'probably in the right job at the right time' (Bowling, 1999). His appointment coincided with a large number of events, entirely outside of his control, that are likely to have had a huge impact on the homicide (and general crime) rates in New York. These include the shrinking of the crack cocaine market in the city, the fact that the previous mayor, David Dinkins, had put in place the funding and training for 7,000 new police officers to go on the beat during Bratton's tenure, community driven crime prevention techniques that had been instituted in response to the social deprivation of the neoliberal policies of the 1980's and the fact that the economy was rapidly improving and unemployment was dropping substantially. For Bratton to claim responsibility for the crime drop, he must show that these factors had no impact on the crime rates in New York and that the only thing that made a difference was his police management techniques and his aggressive 'order-maintenance policing' (OMP).

Rosenfeld, Fornango and Rengifo (2007) conducted a study of the impact of OMP on precinct level crime rates in New York. While they found some 'statistically significant but small' effects of OMP on crime-reduction, they concluded 'that the impact of aggressive order enforcement on the reduction in homicide and robbery rates in New York City during the 1990s was modest at best.' Claims about the successes of the NYPD's zero tolerance campaign are not supported by independent research.

What is perhaps most interesting about these claims is their impact on policy beyond New York and the language used to describe the techniques applied. While supporters are keen to justify tough policing and thus the label 'zero tolerance', others wish to distance themselves from the phrase, loaded as it is with discourses of intolerance. This discourse inculcates a culture of police 'toughness' that increased the number of complaints of police misconduct in New York and even reached the point where an officer announced, 'This is Giuliani time', while sexually assaulting and beating a woman (Dixon, 1999). Bratton (1998) himself is quick to distance himself from the concept of 'zero tolerance' saying that it 'smacks of overzealousness' and that 'it is not a credible policy'. He claims that 'zero-tolerance' as a concept evolved in discussions about New York rather than coming from its policy makers and that in fact OMP is not a 'zero-tolerance' approach. OMP, he claims can improve 'the quality of urban life' but he concedes it is dangerous. The conclusions to be drawn from the 'New York story' may continue to be debated for years, but it is certain that the slipperiest of concepts such as 'quality of life' and 'community policing' will be at the centre of the discussions.

Private Policing

There is a growing reliance on the private security industry to fill the gap between what the state can provide in terms of policing resources, and what Morgan and Newburn (1997) have described as the British public's almost insatiable demand for policing services. This is beginning to cause issues regarding the supply of broader policing services to many sectors of society. The police cannot be everywhere at once and so some people, groups and businesses hire their own security services. These can be in the form of 'bouncers' (Hobbs *et al.*, 2003; Hobbs *et al.*, 2007), airport security

staff, guard-dog handlers on building sites, night watchmen, concierges and so on. These are examples merely of human private policing, the employment of private security officers (PSOs) to protect private interests. The breadth of electronic and mechanical 'policing' techniques is as large again (Marx, 1988; Hudson, 1997; South, 1997 [2002]). This trend towards private provision of 'policing' services is a demonstration that those with the resources to do so are prepared to spend money and time protecting themselves from the risks of modern society rather than rely on the protection of centralized agencies such as the state police.

Reiner (1992) argues that this privatization of policing is part of a response to the changes that are involved in moving to a post-modern world. Mass private-property such as office blocks, university campuses, shopping malls (Shearing and Stenning, 1983) and theme parks (Shearing and Stenning, 1985 [1996]) are protected from the 'deviance' of the 'other', not by using police officers on the beat, but by building in social control mechanisms including lighting and cameras as well as keeping customer service staff constantly applying, and monitoring compliance with, rules and regulations, so called 'architectural regulation' (Jones, 2007b: 171). The police officer is oftentimes not welcome on the private property (despite its quasi-public character) as it might reduce the commercial experience of consumers (Button, 2007: 49). This leaves the police officer outside the walls of the quasi-public spaces in which so much of modern commercial and social activity takes place. The police officer, as Klockars (1985) noted many years ago, continues patrolling little but the street, its users and inhabitants; that is to say, all that is not private. What is different now, is that many of the activities of the street have moved inside the mass-private domains where the police officer is not so welcome.

The numbers of people who are involved in the provision of private security services has long been difficult to calculate (Shearing and Stenning, 1981: 198; Johnston, 2007: 27). Button (2007) cites research which suggests that there could be more than 330,000 people employed in the private security industry in the UK. Given the size of the sector it is somewhat surprising how little research has been done in the area. PSOs are a growing part of the policing process and their behaviour is perhaps underestimated in its effect. Button's research found that PSOs are often paid poorly, have little education and, not surprisingly are mostly keen to move on to another job, for example as a police constable. Many were also badly trained, some had not even received the basic training as they were needed immediately in active service in order to satisfy the demands of a 'recruitment crisis'. The PSOs themselves generally felt that training was inadequate and that the companies didn't invest enough in the training process.

Although PSOs do not have the same powers as police officers, as citizens they have a substantial toolkit of which to avail (Button, 2007: Chapter 3). These include the 'universal' powers available to us all as citizens, including the power of citizen's arrest and the right of freedom of expression to ask someone to refrain from particular behaviour. In this regard, a PSO is merely a person in uniform, or a citizen paid to be in attendance. Along with universal tools, Button describes 'select tools' that derive from the fact that the PSO is an agent of a powerful individual or corporation and can use the powers that body has accrued in private law (for example employment law, contract law, the law of property) to enable them to make demands on people within their social control net. From these private arrangements PSOs can derive the right to

search (from employment contracts) and the right to remove someone from premises (as a person who refuses to leave a premises when asked to do so instantly becomes a trespasser who can be removed using reasonable force). These universal and select tools are used by PSOs in a massive number of venues around the country and form the basis of the PSO's role.

Private security provision also raises questions regarding the problems of potentially creating a 'policing apartheid'. Will those with resources, or control over resources, be able to provide bespoke policing and security services for their own needs, whereas those who are most at risk of victimization (the poor and the marginalized) will have least access to those services? Centralized policing, for all its faults, aspires to be available to all. At its heart the police mission is to protect the human rights of everyone in their jurisdiction (Patten Commission, 1999), be they suspect, convict, resident, tourist or colleague. How well the police acquit themselves in this regard is another question entirely, but as an aspiration, it is a laudable one. Police are supposed to be a democratic centralized solution to crime and security to which we are all able to have something approaching equal access. The pluralization of policing can be seen to be an undermining of these democratic ideals by allowing some to buy more security than others (Jones *et al.*, 1996). Perhaps the biggest test of neighbourhood policing is how well it will be able to bridge the 'security divide' that is slowly beginning to appear as a result of this pluralization of policing (Jones and Newburn, 2006a).

The important contrast between the state police officer and the PSO is that the police officer is employed to balance the human rights of all, whereas the PSO is employed

to act in their employer's interest. Given that the vast majority of PSOs are employed by private companies it is easy to see that the PSO's impact on profit-maximization is the most important priority for the employer. While companies want their customers to feel safe in their shopping mall, at some point, increasing the number of PSOs in the mall will not reduce loss of goods through shoplifting sufficiently to justify the cost of a further deployment of officers and similarly, there must come a point when having too many PSOs will not make consumers feel any safer, or may in fact make them feel less safe. While these two points may not coincide, what is interesting from this theoretical perspective is that at some point, the company will have enough PSOs. This is in stark contrast with the public police who are almost incapable of providing enough 'bobbies on the beat'. Politicians do not tend to prescribe what the optimum number of police officers is, or suggest that there could be a diminishing marginal return on increased officer numbers. Though in the private security industry this decision is taken routinely. This is probably because the economic pain of paying for the policing service is abstracted from the person calling for 'more bobbies on the beat' whereas the economic pain is directly apparent to the corporation paying for provision of PSOs. This is consistent with the experience of prison provision in the US where there was a consistent political mandate for increasing prison places but the borrowing requirements were constantly defeated in elections (McDonald, 1994: 32; Mehigan and Rowe, 2007: 359). It seems that when it comes to the provision of security services, there can often be difficulties justifying to ourselves at the point of payment that the service is in fact worth it.

As the provision of policing services increases in volume and type, the police are forced to respond. The form that the response should take is not obvious however.

Should the police provide a regulatory or licensing function and supervise the private providers by making sure their staff are trained and licensed? Should the police simply enter the marketplace as ‘just another provider’ of policing services, albeit ones with greater powers than their competitors? If such a market driven process were to be applied, could those in marginalized areas be given subsidies towards deciding what type of policing provision they wanted, a sort of voucher scheme to help provide policing services to all? In such a model the state police could be left in the uneasy position of being both industry regulators and a competitor within the industry (Crawford, 2006b: 153; Clarke *et al.*, 2007).

Community or neighbourhood policing projects raise governance issues of their own as neighbourhoods decide to employ wardens, or work with businesses who have their own security provision. The texture of security provision for neighbourhoods, as well as for mass private property, is changing with the greater availability of private policing. This question of how to regulate a plural policing structure is addressed to some extent in the next chapter’s discussion of the ‘governance of security’ (Johnston, 2007).

Conclusion

The practitioner applying the techniques of neighbourhood policing is operating in a fluid and constantly changing environment. They must work with terms and concepts which are at best unstable and in so doing attempt to apply a collection of policing strategies (such as POP and ILP) to the priority problems of their neighbourhood. These techniques are not administered in a vacuum, and the police are not the only players who are working on providing ‘security’ and ‘policing’ to the public.

Neighbourhood policing is merely one form of 'policing' which the public police engage in. Within the greater sphere of security provision, it is one of countless forms which are used by different sections of society. The neighbourhood officer is only one small component in a large (and growing) web of security providers. It is to this complex web that the next chapter turns. It will look at the 'governance of security' and how neighbourhood policing might best be viewed as one 'node' in an elaborate web of security governance. In such a web the project of neighbourhood policing must work hard to meet the many demands that are made of it and use, as best as possible the conceptual and quantitative tools that are available in order to remain a relevant provider of security for the public.

Chapter 2

How Can Neighbourhood Policing Be Contextualized and Analysed?

The silent explosion in private security provision discussed at the end of the last chapter is indicative of the large, convoluted and evolving security marketplace in which neighbourhood policing operates. This 'plural policing' environment is one in which the role of the public police in providing security for their nation's public has been seriously eroded by private competition, or at least private provision. This chapter looks at the new modalities of security governance and what they mean for how we conceive of security. The criminal justice system it is argued, is not the best way to provide security to the public. Although the process of adjudicating publicly on allegations of criminal activity is a fair way of administering punishment, it is hard to see how this provides the public with a heightened level of security. For this reason neighbourhood policing can be viewed as an effort by the public police to increase the security of the publics in the neighbourhoods in which they operate.

Each of these security providers interact with each other creating a web of interacting security arrangements. This chapter argues that it is useful to consider each of these providers as 'nodes' of security governance connected in an interwoven web of nodes, each attempting to influence the security provision environment for its own ends. It is further posited that neighbourhood policing and each neighbourhood partnership can be understood theoretically as one node using its connections and influences to try to resolve the problems of security provision in its neighbourhood.

A substantial amount of pressure is placed on the resolution of these security provision problems. Neighbourhood policing is expected to increase the accountability and legitimacy of the police as well as increase the levels of reassurance of the public, while at the same time gathering intelligence for managing effective policing and reducing crime. These are substantial challenges for a set of nodes of security governance. Challenges that are not made easier by the difficulties in measuring the success of interventions. Crime itself is notoriously difficult to quantify and as such, the 'amount' of crime may not be the best way to measure the success of neighbourhood policing. Thus it is important to consider the more nebulous concepts against which neighbourhood policing may be judged such as 'fear of crime' and 'anti-social behaviour'. Finally the chapter discusses the approach to achieving these new policy goals. Reassurance Policing, a forerunner of neighbourhood policing, and its theoretical underpinnings are discussed along with a brief description of some of the partnerships between the police and other agencies that work on trying to reduce crime and disorder. The breadth of the topics discussed means that their treatment is necessarily brief, but all the issues relate to the process of neighbourhood policing in this research.

The Governance of Security

Security v Justice

Although we often expect or assume that security and justice can both be provided by an efficient criminal justice system, they are two substantially different things. Talk of deterrence (Wilson, 1975 [1996]) and rehabilitation (Dunbar and Langdon, 1998 [2002]) allow us to justify the imposition of penalties on those deemed to have breached society's norms because deterrence and rehabilitation make society more

secure. Alongside this security society attempts to administer penalties in a fair and just manner. It is for this reason that democratic societies have developed 'due process', a set of procedural hurdles that the state must pass before it can inflict punishment on someone (Starmer *et al.*, 2001; Fairweather, 2005). Subject to some practical exceptions, court cases must be conducted in public and run in established and predictable fashion according to rules set down in law; police conduct must be almost impeccable in collecting evidence; suspects are considered innocent until proven guilty; and sentences are imposed with as much consistency and fairness as possible. There is not space in this discussion to review the many critiques of this 'system' for meting out justice (Beccaria, 1764 [1996]; Kropotkin, 1898 [1996]; Stanko, 1985 [2002]; Hulsman, 1986 [1996]; Smart, 1995; Muncie, 1999 [2002]; Belloni and Hodgson, 2000 [2002]; Creaton, 2003) but suffice it to say, there is a developed system of establishing liability and imposing proportionate punishment. A system of which the police have long been the 'gatekeepers'. From this gatekeeper role, the police can use their discretion to proceed with prosecutions with the intention of deterring crime and punishing offenders. The division of labour between the investigator, prosecuting lawyers, defence lawyers and judge allows for transparency, a robust interrogation of the case against the defendant and the supervision of those in positions of power by other actors in the process. From this very fleeting discussion, covering historical developments from Magna Carta to the present day, it is only intended to point out that in the UK there is a measured approach to the imposition of punishment upon those who are found to have committed criminal acts. This measured approach, for all its flaws, is what is considered 'criminal justice' in the UK and most anglophonic countries.

However, it would appear from the constant rise in crime from the end of the second world war until the mid 1990s that this process was not in fact making us particularly safe when it comes to criminal victimization. As discussed above, the police do not have a huge effect on crime rates and sentencing appears to have little or no impact on crime. When sentencing policies were reviewed in the 1970s the only justification that could be maintained for imprisonment was considered to be retribution as the others (deterrence, rehabilitation and incapacitation) were considered to be ineffective or unrealistic (von Hirsch, 1976 [1996]). Yet throughout the post war period, constant change has been occurring at a pace unseen in human history. It seems that almost every graph of human behaviour be it carbon emissions (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2007), international trade (Stiglitz, 2002), volunteering, giving blood and other forms of social capital (Putnam, 2000), as well as homicide rates (Eisner, 2001), population and economic growth (Fogel, 2005) show steep and substantial changes since the end of the Second World War (Baumann, 1997). These social changes have led some commentators to argue that a fundamental epoch-making change has occurred in the last sixty years. Those stating the case at its highest call this 'postmodernism', an era that is a complete break from the previous 'modern' era (Hunt, 1991 [1996]). Others, more circumspectly and not wishing to proclaim their own period of history to be the most significant moment in what may be in fact a larger period of change, consider it to be an extension of the modern era and thus call it 'late-modernity' (Garland, 2002).

Whichever is true, it is hard to deny that we are in a period of great social change. What is important here, is that with change comes uncertainty. Gone are the permanent and pensionable jobs of a generation ago, consigned to history along with

the unskilled manual labour opportunities that kept the traditional working class family working. The traditional 'breadwinner' role assumed by many unskilled males has also been substantially undermined as industrial and agricultural jobs have been eroded by foreign competition and technology (Clare, 2001). The economy in most western democracies has become a streamlined world in which everyone must compete. Couple this with the ever present 'threats' of climate-change, bird-flu (or other imminent pandemic), terrorism, new-terrorism, the proliferation of nuclear weapons and small arms, immigration, sexually transmitted diseases, road accidents, pollution and global credit markets, and it is easy to conclude that the world is a risky place (Beck, 1992). We are all surrounded by these 'threats' to 'human security' (Kaldor, 2006).

Everybody in contemporary society, apart perhaps from a very few, wish to *be* safe from these risks and in many cases they are. However, they also wish to *feel* that they are safe from these risks. And who have we turned to in the past when there has been a 'threat'? The police, the nation's twenty-four-hour-social-service, has been called upon to deal with the threat of outsiders and to provide protection. It is to them that we turn to deal with what Bittner (1990) termed 'something-that-ought-not-to-be-happening-and-about-which-someone-had-better-do-something-now!' For good or bad, society has turned to the police throughout its history to deal with almost all of its crises. The question today is, 'can they continue to provide protection against these post/late-modern risks?' or more pertinently, 'should they?' Indeed this further raises the question 'did the police ever really provide such security?' It is clear that any such security provision was at best uneven.

There is an almost insatiable demand for 'security' and it is qualitatively different from any demand for 'justice'. If justice is the careful application of rules and procedures to individual cases to determine appropriate punishment, security is something different. Security is a protection of individuals, families and society from the risks of contemporary society. Security and justice are easy to mistake for each other or to merge into one task. Indeed it was only in May 2007 that the Home Office was split to separate its security roles (policing, immigration etc) from its 'justice' roles (courts, prisons, probation, legal aid etc.) In terms of security from crime, the criminal justice system is charged with providing both justice and security. However, it is more realistic to consider both operating in separate planes and with different agendas. To use two crude examples; a just and fair sentence to a recidivist shoplifter may not provide security for future victims, while imprisoning someone indefinitely for alleged terrorist offences may provide security but is far from falling within any credible notion of justice. Justice and security can be in direct tension with one another.

This tension provides us with an important question; how do we as a society provide the security we so desire, yet at the same time prevent or at least impair the potential for the unequal distribution of security provision, or worse still, the provision of security at the expense of certain groups in society? In essence; 'how do we govern security?'

'Policing' or the 'Governance of Security'?

The provision of security is no longer something that can solely be the responsibility of the police. As discussed in the previous chapter, the current movement towards the

responsibilization of the citizen and the consumption of private security services are examples of the pluralization of that responsibility. The broad concept of 'policing' belongs even less to the police now than it has at any time in the history of the 'new police. Policing is now all about managing the risks of modern life and controlling our sense of security. It is for this reason that Shearing argues that 'policing' should be reconceptualized as the 'governance of security' (Shearing, 2007: 250). Security governance he argues, has moved away from the control of the nation state to a diverse polycentric body of organizations and individuals. This descriptive approach has come to be known as a 'nodal governance' approach. Security is constructed and controlled by a plurality of nodes each acting within their own sphere of influence and interacting to a greater or lesser extent with other nodes that effect them.

Security governance has come to be divided into two different categories. The *auspices* are those who legitimize the security provision, for example the state as a regulator of PSOs, and the *provider* or the body that actually does the work in order to provide the security on the ground. The latter is the rower, the former the cox who steers, motivates and encourages the rower/provider in its work (Crawford, 2006a). In a nodal governance analysis, any one node can steer or row, or both. Which leads us to the obvious next question; 'what is a node?'

The definition of a node is almost deliberately broad in order to prevent the exclusion of institutions and groupings who have an influence on the governance of security, thus they are described as 'sites of knowledge, capacity and resources that function as governance auspices or providers' (Wood and Shearing, 2007: 27). These nodes need not necessarily be formal organizations such as the police or probation service but

could include much less formal but undoubtedly influential groupings such as street gangs or trade associations.

In a world where the provision of 'policing' services are becoming ever more diverse, it is clear that there is a need for a reappraisal of the 'Hobbesian *Leviathan*' view of top-down security governance provided by a centralized nation state. While the nation-state may have based its own legitimacy on the provision of internal (and indeed external) security for its composite individuals, that role has now been somewhat overtaken. Nodal governance may provide us with a tool for understanding and re-describing what is taking place in policing and in the case of this research may provide us with a tool for analysing the interactions of multiple parties to the process of neighbourhood policing.

The Many Things That Neighbourhood Policing is Supposed to Do

There are high expectations for neighbourhood policing. As a policing policy that is centrally driven, it strives to change the police by reconnecting them with the community and building on these links to make them a more successful provider of security governance than anyone else. This can be seen to allow them a competitive advantage in a market environment (see discussion on private policing above) or an effort to increase the actual or perceived security of their public. Neighbourhood policing, by connecting with people and working on their priority concerns should increase the accountability and legitimacy of the police. In so doing it will reassure the public about their security. This co-production of security will also have positive benefits in terms of helping to gather information which can successfully be turned

into intelligence and assist strategic decision-making, allowing for more successful use of resources in tackling crime.

An example of just how much is expected of neighbourhood policing can be seen in the research of Millie and Herrington on the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP), a pilot scheme that was the forerunner of neighbourhood policing. After reviewing the policy material and interviewing practitioners on the programme, they found that there was a total of ten distinct aims of the NRPP as understood by policy-makers and practitioners:

- To reduce fear of crime
- To increase public confidence in the police
- To increase community efficacy
- To improve intelligence gathering
- To reduce crime
- To reduce anti-social behaviour
- To provide structure to community policing
- To improve the local environment – both physical and social
- To provide legitimacy to local policing decisions
- To facilitate consensus policing (2005: 53)

It is clear that there are high expectations for neighbourhood policing and it is important to discuss some of these themes because they do not all neatly dovetail together to form a unitary direction for neighbourhood policing. In fact some, such as legitimacy and crime fighting, can be in direct conflict at times.

Accountability

Making the police accountable to their public has long been a complicated problem. As the repository of legitimate force in society, the control of the police is of great importance and has great potential for misuse. For this reason it is essential that police power be carefully supervised, but supervision risks merging into control and there is a very real risk of ceding greater and greater powers to the police and drifting towards a 'law and order society' controlled by the majority (Hall, 1980 [1996]). The police after all owe a duty to all the public they serve regardless of how unpalatable some sections of that public find other sections, for example 'terrorists' (Netanyahu, 2001; Stuntz, 2002; Gearty, 2006; Hassett, 2006; Innes and Thiel, 2008), drug users (Brook and Stringer, 2005), ethnic minorities (Keith, 1993 [1996]; Bowling and Phillips, 2003), or football hooligans (Waddington, 2007: 131). These issues raise a difficult balancing act for those managing questions of police accountability. How do you steer a course between the Scylla of unfettered police discretion and the Charybdis of an internal army?

This question has been approached in England and Wales by using a tri-partite system whereby the police role is controlled by the Chief Constable, a Local Policing Authority (LPA) and the Home Office. The system has been fraught with difficulties, most famously during the miners' strike of the early 1980s. The Thatcher Government, having recently won an election on a radical new 'law and order' manifesto (Downes and Morgan, 2002) and faced with strong unions, used the local police forces, along with reinforcements from outside the constabularies, to assist in breaking the strike and controlling civil unrest. This was notwithstanding the fact that

the vast majority of people living in the constabulary areas in which the conflict was taking place supported the striking miners. The Chief Constables and the Government fell back on the myth of constabulary independence to argue that they were merely enforcing the law and maintaining order, that there was no political interference and they remained objective, but this was manifestly untrue. Reiner describes personal communications with at least one Chief Constable admitting that they were under extreme pressure from central government to control the miners regardless of how they would prefer to police it themselves (Reiner, 2000b: 223). Many of the LPAs were controlled by the opposition Labour Party and argued that they should be the ones to control policing in their area. The ensuing power struggle between the three corners of the accountability triangle exposed just how difficult it is to maintain transparent police accountability in difficult political times (Smith, 2007b).

For years to come the effects of the miners' strike reverberated. Never in the recent history of the state police in England has force been used in such a blatant and political fashion as during that time, in almost exactly the fashion feared by those who had argued against its establishment in the Nineteenth Century. When political protest is so blatantly put down at the behest of political leaders and without any clear lines of accountability, respect for the police can be seriously eroded. The cosy notions of the police officer as a friend of the people policed is seriously undermined by such bypassing of public opinion. A similar challenge to long held trust in the police occurred in New Zealand in the early 1980s when a similarly neo-liberal government used police to crush protests against a tour by the internationally embargoed South African rugby team. The often violent treatment of the protesters showed in clear view the potential for misuse of the police for political gain (Cameron, 1981).

The balancing act of accountability is essential to the process of neighbourhood policing. Connecting the neighbourhood police officer to other stakeholders in their neighbourhood may, it is hoped, bring with it a form of accountability. By meeting their officers regularly and hearing feedback on the progression of objectives, stakeholders should be able to define the objectives for their area, know their community beat officer and expect work to be done on these objectives. While the struggle for a satisfactory method of holding the police accountable continues at the national and transnational level (Sheptycki, 2007), neighbourhood policing and the partnerships within which it works should, in theory, provide some broader consultative input into the process of resolving local problems, although even this may be wishful thinking.

Legitimacy

According to Mawby, '[i]n the policing context, legitimacy is the rightful exercise of authority or the rightful use of power' (2008). This is clearly a complex area, where the 'rightfulness' may come from different sources, such as legal authority or a more nebulous notion of 'consent'. It is towards the latter that neighbourhood policing would appear to be most likely to contribute, by connecting the neighbourhood police officer to local stakeholders, it may be possible to increase the sense of legitimacy which underpin policing interventions in the neighbourhood.

A police service that is seen to be operating legitimately will find its work a lot more straightforward and arguably, more effective. Tyler (2006) argues that people obey

the law, not because they feel it is fair or they fear apprehension but because they believe the procedures which are invoked to enforce it are fair. Thus it can be counterproductive to use heavy handed policing techniques because it may undermine respect for the law which it is supposed to protect. Kane (2005), in a study of New York precinct data across twenty-one years found that in disadvantaged areas indicators of compromised police legitimacy (such as misconduct and over-policing) predicted increases in violent crime. Procedural fairness, in reality and appearance is essential to the police being able to remain effective.

This is borne out clearly by the history of escalating tensions between police and black or minority ethnic (BME) groups. Stop and search policies which repeatedly targeted BME people and caused significant unrest (Henry, 2007b). Indeed it was these types of excessive policing tactics that led to the Brixton riots of 1981, a seminal moment in English policing that exposed the overt racism of the police and lead to a substantial judicial enquiry (Scarman, 1981; Hall, 1999 [2002]). Neighbourhood policing is part of an effort to revert this trend by working with communities to solve problems in partnership, and in the process engage in the slow process of building mutual trust. Whether this can be done may depend on the experiences in individual neighbourhoods, but it will be a long road with some communities who have long been at odds with the police. When it comes to police legitimacy the process of creation is infinitely more arduous than that of destruction. As Goldsmith says, 'trust arrives on foot and departs on horseback' (2005: 445).

When discussing the problems of police legitimacy and accountability that arose out of the Scarman report it is worth considering the development of police-community

consultation committees. In the wake of the Scarman Report police constabularies began to create police-community consultation committees (PCCCs). Police legitimacy and accountability were at a low ebb in the wake of the Scarman Report (1981). The final report had a number of suggestions for approaches to clawing back some of this lost ground. In essence the report was striving to return to a form of 'policing by consent' and move on from the disappointingly confrontational 'law and order' techniques that culminated in 'Operation Swamp' and ultimately the Brixton riots. Scarman's conclusions lead to what Reiner called a 'fundamental re-orientation of police thinking' (1985: 127). The main conclusion of the report was that policing should not be about 'law enforcement'. Instead the principle priority of policing should be 'the maintenance of public tranquility'.

Central to this approach was the notion of 'community policing' and police accountability. Scarman grappled with the classic problems of accountability such as the tension between demands for political control of the police and the importance of independence from political interference to the police role. 'The solution', according to Savage, 'was to lie in a form of accountability dependent not on powers of direction or on regulatory powers and sanctions, but on *consultation and co-operation*' (1984: 56, italics as in original). The *Police Act 1964* had provided police authorities with the power to establish committees or other means of community consultation, however it did not make it mandatory. This obligation on police authorities was one of the recommendations of the Scarman Report. Consultation and co-operation were, the report proposed, to become statutory duties to be discharged by Chief Constables and police authorities. As Savage puts it:

Between them they would be responsible for constructing and supervising consultative machinery and liaison committees at police divisional and sub-divisional levels, partly on the lines of existing schemes such as Community Liaison Branches and Police-Community Relations bodies. (Savage, 1984: 56)

By the time the legislation which created that duty was brought into force, many police authorities had already established the mechanisms required to conduct this type of consultation. The legislation which finally created this duty was the *Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984* (PACE), a controversial act with a complex legislative history (Boateng, 1984; Henry, 2007a). Section 106 of the Act stipulates that ‘arrangements shall be made in each police area for obtaining the views of people in that area about matters concerning the policing of the area and for obtaining their co-operation with the police in preventing crime’. Although consultation and co-operation are the ostensible legislative aim, a contemporary commentator noted that, ‘[a] cynic might be forgiven for believing this last objective is the real motivation’ (Greaves, 1986: 79).

This is where the issues arising from the formation of PCCCs begin to chime with the current incarnation of community policing. The parallels between the PCCC and the NAG are obvious. Both groups are formed to try to ‘connect’ the police to the community. In some way it is hoped that they will create a form of accountability which will help avoid the type of ‘downward spiral’ of police-community relations experienced in the months running up to the Brixton riots. Some of the problems faced by the PCCCs were similar to the very problems faced by NAGs which are

described later in this research. For example the problem of getting key groups to attend consultation meetings appears to have been as much a problem in the 1980s as it is today:

The Community-Police Liaison Group for Lambeth has been in existence for over a year. It has broad community representation, but there are one of two important local organisations which have not sought membership. The Group is slowly trying to come to grips with the mammoth task of helping to improve police-community relations. (Greaves, 1984: 72)

However, while there are similarities between PCCCs and NAGs, there are substantial differences. NAGs are perhaps more pro-active in that they are mandated with a practical function beyond merely 'consulting' or 'listening to the community'. The NAG is charged with problem-solving, using the experience and powers of its constituent members to try and resolve the problems that have been divined through this consultation process. This was not the case with the PCCCs. PCCCs were often found to have provided useful feedback to police which can influence their choice of tactics, and some commentators have found this to have had a genuine impact on policing and the public perception of it. Clare, for example, describes the positive contribution of the PCCC to police-community relations in Brixton: 'Policing of the area, despite a high crime rate, has been much more sensitive and careful – thanks in part, no doubt, to the vigorous, twice-monthly meetings of the new Community/Police Consultative Committee' (1984: 53).

While PCCC's may not have had a developed problem-solving focus, as can be seen from section 106 of PACE, set out above, both the NAG and the PCCC had a role in providing intelligence on criminal activity in their local community. However it is the active problem-solving mandate which sets the NAG apart from the PCCC.

Notwithstanding the clear parliamentary intention of section 106 that the PCCC should obtain the views of the public and obtain their co-operation, research found that much of the underlying politicking of police accountability remained the same. Savage and Wilson, for example, studied post-Scarman police community consultation arrangements in a constabulary in southern England (Savage and Wilson, 1987). They found that, contrary to what might be expected, the main areas of tension were not between police representatives and 'the community', but between police authorities and the consultative committees. It appears that even with the consultative framework set in place, the struggle for accountability continues, albeit against a different legislative backdrop. Perhaps Bayley put it best when he said; 'Accountability to a community does not depend on particular mechanisms but on the spirit activating the political system as a whole ... Political habits, not administrative structures are the crucial ingredient in making accountability vital.' (Bayley, 1983)

Providing Reassurance

Reassurance policing, in its essence, is about convincing people that they are safer without increasing their safety. Although the idea came about during a period of falling crime rates, so some might argue that security was increasing. Thus, it could be held that while security was increasing so was fear of crime, and so efforts needed to be made to reassure people of their safety.

The theory is simple; people want to see their police. They want to know that they are there, on the street, not in a car or an office. They need to see them to feel safe. Reassurance policing aims to reduce the number of 'signal crimes', crimes which lead to a feeling of insecurity, such as graffiti and other signs of disorder, so as to make it seem that there is less to be scared about. Coupled with increased foot-patrols, reassurance policing has been found to reduce fear of crime. The success of reassurance policing techniques has been incorporated into neighbourhood policing's philosophy (Innes, 2005) with the emphasis on the importance of the patrol function being epitomised by the recruitment of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) to assist with the job of patrolling. These will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Gathering Intelligence and Reducing Crime

Along with improving local accountability, increasing legitimacy and providing reassurance, neighbourhood policing is also expected to assist in the gathering of intelligence to feed into intelligence led policing (ILP) (Tilley, 2003; Association of Chief Police Officers, 2006: section 4). The logic of this is that in gathering information to drive ILP, neighbourhood policing is directly contributing to crime fighting, even if it is not itself crime-fighting as it is traditionally understood. A

carefully constructed relationship with the community should provide a rich harvest of intelligence on issues ranging from graffiti to terrorism (Home Office, 2005a). It is also argued that community policing could in fact help deal with hard to reach crimes such as domestic violence, by allowing police officers the chance to get to know a locality, its residents and families and so begin to develop the relationships needed to deal with it (Morash and Robinson, 2002).

In sum, the expectations on neighbourhood policing are high. The results demanded of community policing are difficult to achieve and may indeed conflict with one another. In such an environment it is problematic to measure how good a job has been done. The balance to be struck between competing interests is an inherently political act and it seems that success on all fronts at all times is clearly impossible. A lot may be achieved, but inevitably neighbourhood policing, like policing itself, can never be a complete success. In other words, it must always be a partial failure.

Problems of Quantifying Crime

Central to managing these expectations which neighbourhood policing finds itself trying to deal with, is the idea of 'crime' and how much of it there is. Despite the fact that the term 'crime' is used so often in policy and popular debates to describe certain types of behaviour, the concept is difficult to define precisely (Lacey, 2002). The quantification of crime is perhaps equally challenging. Measuring 'how much crime is out there' is difficult for many reasons. All the same methodological pitfalls apply to this problem as to any other attempts to describe the social world using quantitative techniques that are better suited to the natural sciences. Even within the natural sciences there is a spectrum of how suitable quantitative techniques are to each

individual science (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997). The social world is complicated by unknown quantities such as human preferences and interactions. As a result it does not lend itself easily to quantification in the way that the world of mathematical physics does.

The problems are legion. Two simple examples help explain why it is so difficult to compare crime data over time. First, what is defined as a crime changes over time as new laws are passed and old ones re-enforced. Secondly, there are so many methods of collecting and enumerating the data that many of the choices on what to include and exclude can be highly influential on the eventual outcome. Crime data can often tell us more about the institutional processes of the data-collecting organization than about any quantity of 'real' crime (Maguire, 1997).

Yet administrative criminologists and practitioners strive for a quantification of how much crime there is in order to seek to understand it better. There are three main ways to go about this quantification process; police complaints data, victim-survey data and self-report data. Each has its shortcomings, but using the three together can help iron out the disadvantages. Just as a cartographer uses different readings on the height of a mountain to help triangulate its altitude, a criminologist can use different methodologies to help get a better picture of the size of the 'pile of crimes'.

For many years police effectiveness was measured using *official statistics* or *recorded crime*. These are statistics compiled by the police themselves from complaints made by the public (Maguire, 2007). The police have always needed the public to inform them of criminal activity in order to combat it and so this seems like a logical way to

approach the quantification of crime. There are a number of problems however. People may or may not report crimes for different reasons. For instance when insurance companies began requiring that stolen property be reported to the police, the instance of complaints of theft increased, although it seems reasonable to assume that the number of actual thefts did not increase quite as dramatically. In the case of other crimes, particularly those with a stigma attached to them, such as sexual offences, it may take a shift in social mores before victims are comfortable making a complaint to the police. Victims may also be reluctant or disinclined to complain to the police if they see them as ineffective or illegitimate as some members of minority groups feel. Certain types of crimes are likely to be under-reported. Corporate crimes, for example are likely to appear in official statistics in only the most vague and meaningless way. Police complaints data has always made street crime appear much greater than corporate crime (Slapper and Tombs, 1999 [2002]: 108) and crimes of the powerful remain difficult to evaluate as a result (Tombs, 2000). So-called 'victimless' crimes such as drug dealing are less likely to be reported to police and are likely to appear in reduced form in the police complaints statistics. Interestingly, it is because of the lack of reported information on these activities that police officers have to be more pro-active about investigation and cultivating human sources. This is one of the most common areas in a force for police corruption to be discovered (Maguire, 2008: 448).

While police forces often measure themselves against their reported crime data, this may not be the best indicator of police effectiveness. Police may have an incentive to record a large amount of crimes in order to demonstrate how snowed under they are and thus argue for increased resources (Coleman and Moynihan, 1996 [2002]: 99).

Although, given the labyrinthine accounting and management techniques used by the Home Office in managing fund distribution and monitoring police effectiveness, this may be a little simplistic. On the other hand, an increase in the number of complaints may in fact be a good sign as it may represent increased confidence in the police and criminal justice system or a change in social mores allowing more open discussion of certain types of crimes. The Prisons Ombudsman, Stephen Shaw describes this incongruity thus: 'is a rise in complaints a good thing? Yes, if it means that prisoners have confidence in the system and are enabled to use it. No, if it means that there has been an underlying downturn in conditions' (Shaw, 2004). The parallels with police complaint data are clear; increasing complaints can be good or bad news and may not mean simply an increase in crime, but may signal increasing confidence in the police or the criminal justice system.

The crucial point about police complaints data is that it is very accurate about telling us one thing; how many crimes are reported to the police that the police have chosen to record. Police complaints data are perhaps a better indicator of bureaucratic processes than a genuine barometer of the levels of criminal activity. Police compiled data are so difficult to use that Maguire argues that 'the use of police-generated crime statistics to say virtually anything definite about crime – including its overall incidence, patterns, and trends – is a pursuit fraught with pitfalls' (Maguire, 2002: 348).

A different approach to counting crimes is to conduct a *victim survey*. This means taking a sample of the population and asking them what crimes they have been the victim of in the last year (or other reporting period). Using this approach, if the survey

methodology is rigorous enough and the respondent feels anonymous enough, it should be possible to by-pass the problems of how the police and criminal justice system is perceived and get a more accurate picture of how much victimization has occurred. In Britain this work is conducted annually and compiled as the British Crime Survey (BCS), which was first conducted in 1982. When it was first conducted it found that the 'dark figure of crime' was substantial and that the police complaints method of recording crime was underestimating the amount of criminal victimization, although it did find that this discrepancy was largely related to less serious crimes. However, care must be taken when comparing police data with BCS data as the latter provides a fuller picture for some types of offence but not for others. For example, sexual offences are reported to BCS surveyors so irregularly as to make the category an almost useless measure. Police complaint data and victim survey data are best considered complimentary rather than directly comparable forms of data (Maguire, 2002: 348-358).

The third form of quantification that can be used is the *self report survey*. This involves surveying a population and asking them how much crime they have committed. It is not commonly used in the UK and when it is used, it is most often used with small populations. A notable exception to this is the BCS which has begun to include a self-report component. This has tended to focus on certain sensitive topics such as drug use and the type of questions have changed considerably from survey to survey. However self report surveys may be a useful way of quantifying some hard to count crimes, including some victimless crimes (Junger-Tas and Haen Marshall, 1985).

It is clear from this brief discussion that something as complicated and contestable as crime does not lend itself to easy statistical quantification. This has serious implications for police forces which, as seemingly ever-expanding organizational entities with growing workforces and great power, seek something against which to measure their own success. Unlike their counterparts in the corporate world, the police officer or Chief Constable do not have the simple goal of maximizing profits against which they can rate themselves. Other goals such as crime rates, fear of crime or levels of anti-social behaviour are needed instead.

Discourses of 'Anti-Social Behaviour'

Like 'community', 'neighbourhood' and 'policing', 'anti-social behaviour' (ASB) is difficult to define. It encompasses a broad range of activities which cause offence to somebody. The official definition comes from the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*: 'Acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as (the defendant).' This is clearly a loose definition of any activity which is entirely dependant on the perceptions of one particular party. The party complaining does not have to prove very much, other than the fact that they have been caused harassment, alarm or distress. When asked about this problem with definition Hazel Blears, then Home Office minister, said that an act was anti-social behaviour whenever the victim thought it was (Liberty, 2007). Even those who invented the concept of anti-social behaviour do not really know what it is. While it may seem preferable to have a Government that acknowledges that many people feel harassed, alarmed and distressed, the problems start to accumulate once efforts are made to control, reduce or punish anti-social behaviour. Without a clear definition of the behaviour which is to be punished, there is a real risk of imposing

inconsistent and arbitrary punishments. Someone playing loud music in one house will be ignored, whereas someone two miles away can become the subject of police and local authority attention for playing the exact same music at precisely the same volume. The difference being that the latter person has less tolerant neighbours than the former.

In order to control anti-social behaviour the 1998 Act created the Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO). Since then the abbreviation ASBO has become part of the national consciousness. It can be found on clothing labels, in newspaper headlines and whole television series have been dedicated to somewhat voyeuristically documenting the lives of those who have received ASBOs. The irony of conducting a voyeuristic television show about people who have breached a code of behaviour which includes voyeurism (Home Office, 2004: 4) appears to have been lost.

Anti-social behaviour is in essence a bespoke form of criminal law (Chakrabarti, 2007). An ASBO itself is a civil order barring the recipient from continuing the proscribed anti-social behaviour. As a civil law order it need merely be proven on the balance of probabilities that the defendant was carrying out anti-social behaviour. The balance of probabilities means that one side's argument is more likely than the other's. When one side is a police officer and the defendant is a young person, it is clear where the benefit of the doubt will lie. The problem arises when the person subject to an ASBO breaches it. They are then criminally liable for such a breach, with a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment (Morgan and Newburn, 2007: 1038). The 'bespoke criminal law' point is simple; ASB legislation and practice allows a local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), Community Safety

Partnership (CSP) or police force, perhaps at the behest of a vocal individual, to get an ASBO against someone else which is so specific to them that it has no relationship with any law the individual could have known prohibited the behaviour. If they breach the order, perhaps because it was set so onerously as to be impossible, they can go to jail. They are imprisoned for something that was not wrong before they did it, they did not know was wrong while they were doing it and was only wrong because *they* did it in *that location* and *someone else felt it was wrong*. In the process of sending them to prison they received none of the protections that have been built up over hundreds of years to protect the accused, because what they are imprisoned for is not actually criminal. If such a sentence provides any form of security for society, it is a perfect example of the achievement of security in the absence of justice. As discussed above, security and justice are distinct policy goals.

Anti-social behaviour has a tendency to target weaker groups in society, particularly young people, the destitute and the powerless, the very groups that have long been described as 'police property'. It hits hardest those people who conduct their private lives in public because privacy is a commodity that can only be enjoyed by those with at least a minimum of resources (Reiner, 1997). Thus homeless people are more likely to conduct street drinking than someone who owns their own home. On any given day both will likely be drinking within fifteen metres of where they sleep, but for the destitute this means being drunk in the public eye, while for the homeowner it is merely 'relaxing'. Anti-social behaviour will often be the latter's description of the former's behaviour.

Young people are a continuous source of complaint about anti-social behaviour. Despite the fact that youth offending and youth justice have been heavily theorized for many years (Sykes and Matza, 1957; Becker, 1963; Muncie, 2004; Morgan and Newburn, 2007), kids hanging around on street corners continue to appear to be the greatest threat to the safety and security of many people around the country. Young people, particularly males, going through the process of adolescence are passing through perhaps one of the most difficult and important stages of the process of becoming socialized into the norms of society. That they have trouble doing so is nothing new. The problems of socialization are legion; education, housing, role-models, peers and family all play an important role. If even one goes wrong, socialization can become difficult. It is because of this complex socialization experience that most offenders are 'adolescents and adults in their twenties' (Smith, 2007a: 640). Farrington in his famous longitudinal study of North London young people found that there were certain risk factors which make it far more likely that a young person will end up committing crime. These included individual risk factors such as personality and temperament, family risk factors such as large family size, parental involvement in crime, child rearing methods or child abuse as well as school factors such as low intellectual attainment (Farrington, 2002: 664-679). These sociological factors are in place long before the young person begins hanging around on street corners. To attempt to fix them by using anti-social behaviour discourse is merely a case of shutting the proverbial stable door after the horse has bolted. As well as not helping to solve the problem, anti-social behaviour discourses run the risks of labelling young people and re-inforcing in them the idea that they are in fact 'bad', 'yobs', or enforce other negative self conceptions. Symbolic interaction theory, or labelling theory (Vold *et al.*, 2002: 210-211), often associated with Becker (1963)

posits that people who are labelled as delinquent will begin to live their lives to fulfil that role. This is aside from structural forces, such as a reduced jobs market for those with criminal records, which might restrict the opportunities of someone who has a conviction. Labelling theory works on the person's own understandings of who they are. By this rationale a young person given an ASBO for joyriding will act up into the role of 'joyrider' and it will become a part of their identity which they actively pursue, rather than a once-off event that they grow out of. Labelling theory suggests that criminal careers can be created by the very people working to end them.

ASB is a part of the pluralization of the governance of security. To use Cohen's analogy it allows us to thin the mesh and widen the net of the criminal justice system (1979). Its subjectivity, lack of procedural safeguards and targetting of the activities of the weakest members of society make the discourse of anti-social behaviour a worrying development in modern criminal justice policy.

The Problem of Fear of Crime

For almost the entire history of what we know as the police, the fighting of 'crime' has been at the centre of their work. Despite the problems and debate attached to defining crime (Ashworth, 2006), and the arguments that it may be better to entirely abandon the concept of crime (Hulsman, 1986 [1996]) or replace it with discourses of 'harm' (Tifft, 1995; Hillyard, 2005), crime as a concept has been something that the police have been happy to work on and the public seem happy to understand. Despite the problems of quantification of crime (discussed above), there is an acceptance in the choice of many managerialist 'key performance indicators' (KPIs) that crime is something that is tangible, that can be worked on and that policing can effect.

There has been a slow realization however that the police do not have much of an effect on the amount of crime. Beginning with the Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment (KCPPE) (Kelling *et al.*, 1974) it began to become apparent that police patrol has little or no effect on reported crime levels. The KCPPE worked alongside the Kansas City Police Department to conduct an experimental re-deployment of officers across different areas of the city. The experiment separated fifteen beats into three groups of five randomly selected beats. In the 'reactive' beats the officers were instructed only to respond to public calls for assistance. In the 'control' beats there was the normal allocation of one preventive patrol car per beat. In the 'preventive' beats routine patrol was increased by a factor of two to three and these beats also benefited from the patrol cars not in use in the 'reactive' beats. Such experimental conditions are exceedingly rare in police research and the findings were influential in debates about the nature of policing. The researchers found that these experimental conditions had no significant impact on reported crime, fear of crime or satisfaction with the police. Increasing police numbers does not reduce crime, despite the common perception that it does, and the desire for more police officers that this perception creates:

The police do not prevent crime. This is one of the best kept secrets of modern life. Experts know it, the police know it, but the public does not know it. Yet the police pretend that they are society's best defense against crime and continually argue that if they are given more resources, especially personnel, they will be able to protect communities against crime. This is a myth.

What is the evidence for this heretical and disturbing assertion? First, repeated analysis has consistently failed to find any connection between the number of police officers and crime rates. Second, the primary strategies adopted by modern police have been shown to have little or no effect on crime. (Bayley, 1994: 3)

If the police cannot affect the 'objective' amount of crime, perhaps they can have an impact on subjective perceptions of crime, they could reduce how much the public fears crime. Ditton *et al.* give this potted history of the study of 'fear of crime':

There was no 'fear' of crime in Britain until it was discovered in 1982. Crime surveyors liked it because whereas only about five interviewees in 100 could recall a crime victimization from the recall period (usually the previous year), 100 out of 100 could give usable data about their 'fear' of crime. Politicians and policy makers liked it because it seemed more amenable to manipulation and reduction than crime itself. Rates of 'fear' of crime, at one point, seemed about to become more important than rates of crime itself. People set about energetically trying to reduce the 'fear' of crime. They failed. (2002: 144)

Fear of crime promises a lot in terms of being a quantifiable indicator of successful policing that is divorced from the seemingly uncontrollable problem of crime. Yet this can cut both ways. When crime reduces, fear of crime may not necessarily follow.

Crime in Britain has reduced substantially in the last ten years, both using official police records and the data provided by the British Crime Survey. Yet fear of crime

has remained high and confidence in the police is falling (Millie and Herrington, 2005: 42; Smith, 2007b). This incongruence between the actual crime rate and the public's perception of crime and their risk of victimization is something that has become a concern for the police and in 2001 the Inspectorate of Constabulary commissioned a thematic report on the issue and this identified a 'reassurance gap' which the police have to work on using techniques such as increasing police patrol alongside greater accessibility of police services and familiarity with local police officers (Povey, 2001).

However, it has been suggested that the 'amount' of fear of crime may in fact be overstated. Yarwood, in research into crime concerns in rural parts of the West Mercia Constabulary, found that fear of crime was not as prevalent as was described in the media. Fear of crime can mean different things to different people. He also found that in fact concerns regarding crime, when unpacked a little, could be as much anxieties about broader perceptions of changes in rural life than actual fear of criminal victimization (Yarwood, 2005: 69). Millie and Herrington (2005: 42) argue that fear of crime in the BCS has been decreasing since the mid-1990s and there is literature to support the position that fear of crime is in fact over-estimated.

Part of the problem lies in the difficulty of measuring subjective feelings. Survey data are difficult to use at the best of times (Parr and Silva, 2005), but when dealing with something as subjective as how much one individual fears something that will most likely never happen to them, the possibilities for inconsistencies between research projects, and within individual projects themselves, is huge. Fear of crime surveys have been getting more sophisticated and complex as they become more common, but

even this constant refining of methodologies makes it difficult to analyse trends in levels of fear of crime. The classic fear of crime survey question, 'how safe do you feel walking alone in this area after dark?' is exceptionally subjective. Farrall and Ditton argue that this type of question provides very little useful information because it:

[M]ay (or may not) ask about actual behaviour; its terms of reference may (or may not) mean different things to different respondents; it may (or may not) collect both (or either) emotional fears and risk assessments; it does not refer to crime and hence may (or may not) collect data relating to the fear of crime. As a quantitative measure of the fear of crime it leaves much to be desired. (1999: 56)

As well as difficulties in getting specific data from fear of crime surveys because of the lack of precision in the questions, cultural and linguistic variations can make it difficult to compare fear of crime data between countries or regions (Pauwels and Pleysier, 2005). Fear of crime data is thus a very shaky indicator of successful policing and one that is open to massage and manipulation by many people who talk about it.

Fear of crime measures appear to have no bearing on the relationship between the surveyed person's fear of crime and the actual risk of victimization they face. People feel safer driving large off-road vehicles when in fact they are more likely to be involved in an accident while driving one (Lauer, 2005: 150). The fact is that far more people consider themselves to be at risk of victimization of any offence than actually

turn out to become victims, creating an inflated sense of fear that is out of proportion to the statistical risk (Chadde *et al.*, 2007: 133). This inflation forces a conceptual distance between the police's traditionally conceived role of fighting crime and the new KPI of reducing fear of crime. Indeed fighting crime may itself be counterproductive to the process of fighting fear of crime if the trappings of crime fighting, such as large scale police presence, themselves induce fear. As Crawford puts it:

Paradoxically, with police officer numbers at an all-time high and more civilian staff than ever, public insecurity and fear of crime remain stubbornly unaffected. In talking up law and order concerns, the government's successive campaigns against antisocial behaviour appear to have fanned public fears rather than reduced them. (2007: 899)

Despite the methodological problems and the difficulties that arise when trying to use fear of crime as a performance indicator, research continues to attempt to use this subjective approach to evaluate the impact of crime on society. Dolan and Peasgood for example attempt to calculate the total costs of fear of crime and in so doing take a very broad definition of those costs as 'all the tangible and intangible costs in anticipation of possible victimization' (2007: 123). Their approach included calculating the average loss of quality adjusted life years (QALYs) per capita as well as more tangible financial losses attached to the costs of private security provision and so forth. This is clearly a wide net for calculating costs and it is understandable that the final figure of £2,097.6 million is a considerable amount of money. It is approximately twenty percent of the cost of crime itself as previously calculated by

Dolan *et al.* (2005). Given the previous discussions about the subjective nature of the methodology for calculating fear of crime, to take such figures at face value might be a dangerous approach to public policy. However they are interesting due to the prevalence of fear of crime discourse in policing policy in recent years, including the efforts to increase the reassurance component of the work of the police and the importance attached to efforts to reduce the fear of crime and increase reassurance (Home Office, 2005a) that are part of the aspirations of the neighbourhood policing programme.

Signal Crimes and Reassurance Policing

The Signal Crimes Perspective (SCP) was developed by Innes and Fielding (2002) as a way of looking at crimes or signs of disorder that have a symbolic impact on those who come into contact with them. Signal crimes have had a substantial impact on the development of reassurance policing, which was itself a precursor of neighbourhood policing and for that reason the two concepts are discussed together in this section.

Signal Crimes

A 'signal crime' has two central characteristics, it is a form of crime or disorder and when viewed by somebody it causes them to change their behaviour due to their interpretation of that crime or disorder. As Innes and Fielding (2002) put it, these 'types of crime are important not just in terms of the harm done to the victim, but also in terms of what they signify and communicate to a wider audience'. Signal crimes therefore are as much about the interpretation of non-victims as they are about the harm done to actual victims. There are scales of signal crimes. High profile murders and indeed terrorist attacks, along with the media coverage they generate have an

important impact on how people conceptualize and navigate their social worlds. In this research however, it is more important to consider the 'micro' signal crime. These are the small scale disorders such as graffiti, glass on the road after car break ins, run-down warehouses with smashed windows due to vandalism or still charred from months-old arson attacks. These, it is posited by proponents of the SCP, cause people to become nervous or even fearful in their environment. As a result they change the way they behave. This semiotic communicative process is at the heart of the SCP. Without communication, without an observer of the signal crime, it is merely a crime. Neither is it a signal crime if it is ignored or has no bearing on the behaviour of the observer. The elevation from mere disorder to signal crime occurs in the mind of the observer.

This interpretation, begs the question; are signal crimes merely another way of appealing to Wilson and Kelling's (1982) 'broken windows' thesis? This is the famous and hugely influential theory published in a non-academic journal, with no empirical backing which argued that where crime and disorder occur and do not receive an appropriate response, they will recur. The appeal of 'broken windows' lay in its simplicity, what the authors themselves called its 'folk-logic'. This simplicity allowed the theory to become an easily digestible foundation for stringent policing strategies such as 'zero-tolerance' and 'order-maintenance' policing, as was the case in New York City in the 1990s (see Chapter 1). However the lack of empirical evidence and the contested 'success' of the New York story suggest that 'broken windows' may not be a perfect prism through which to view the relationship between urban disorder and crime.

However empirical research does not support the simple causal mechanics of the 'broken windows' thesis. Sampson and Raudenbusch conducted two largescale studies into the effect of 'collective efficacy' on crime and disorder in urban environments. They defined 'collective efficacy' as 'social cohesion among neighbours combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good' (1997). Their studies looked at the relationship between collective efficacy and violent crime and found that they were correlated in the neighbourhood segments studied, having controlled for neighbourhood structural characteristics. They found in an earlier study that, 'the combined measure of informal social control and cohesion and trust remained a robust predictor of lower rates of violence' (1997). While in the later study, they found that their research did not support a 'broken windows' theoretical framework. The relationship between disorder and crime they argued was 'spurious, except perhaps for burglary (1999). 'Broken windows' sees disorder as having a positive causal relationship with crime, whereas Sampson and Raudenbush argue that crime and disorder are both symptoms of the same set of circumstances; comparative structural disadvantage and lack of social cohesion. In short, disorder does not cause crime but arises for the same reasons.

SCP similarly does not claim that disorder causes crime but that certain crimes and disorderly events or behaviours are 'construed as "signal crimes" and "signal events" by individuals and communities' (Innes and Fielding, 2002). These signal crimes/events are then interpreted as a form of 'warning signal' of risk by its audience who then alter their behaviour. Certain crimes and disorders are causally linked to feelings of fear and the production of protective behaviour (Innes, 2004a).

However, like virtually all efforts at classifying actions as criminal or deviant, classifying signal crimes is a difficult and political process. Take for example graffiti, which is often given as an example of a signal crime (National Reassurance Policing Project, 2005: 13). There are divided views on whether it is actually criminal damage or an art form in its own right. Some academic commentators such as Snyder (2006) argue that it is a form of cultural expression which can lead to the development of subcultural economies and offer some artists a means of employment. Others such as Commissioner Bratton of the NYPD consider it another sign of urban disorder (Bratton, 1998). The debate is alive and well in the contemporary art world and is perhaps most famously elaborated in the debates ensuing about the career of the English graffiti artist Banksy who has held successful exhibitions in prestigious galleries but who began his career spray painting public walls, many of which have achieved a value far beyond their inherent worth as collected building materials due to his intervention (*Guardian*, 10 December 2007). Indeed when Banksy left a small stone with a graffitied picture of a neanderthal pushing a shopping trolley in the British Museum, the Museum decided to add it to their collection rather than consider it a violation of their exhibit space (Jones, 2007a). At the other end of the scale from Banksy of course is the simple vandalism which is perhaps at its worst when covering public service and safety information notices or other street signage. To some extent it presumably comes down to context. In some locations it may be art, in others it is clearly vandalism. Either way, the debate about whether graffiti is art or crime demonstrates that when it comes to defining signal crimes, like so many other aspects of the process of policing, almost everything is politically contestable and prolifically contested.

Graffiti, aside from its potential artistic merits, is symptomatic of the subjectivity of the SCP. Graffiti may be much less likely to become a signal crime in neighbourhoods that are already very run down, where more serious crimes are likely to cause alarm, whereas in more orderly or secure neighbourhoods, graffiti would likely cause great alarm.

While subjective decisions are constantly made by the police, signal crimes create a new potential layer of subjectivity with which those with the most influence can gain access to publicly provided policing services to assist them in dealing with their own anxieties about their own security, however fanciful they may be. How are the police to respond to the same two pieces of graffiti in two different neighbourhoods? Is it a matter of attending to the one which causes the most alarm or applying resources to the area where the likelihood of victimization is more serious?

Reassurance Policing

Signal crimes are important for this research because they influenced the formation of the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP), a pilot policing programme based on the idea that while it may not be possible to make people any safer in terms of their risk of victimization, it may be possible to make them feel safer. This is another attempt to tackle fear of crime rather than crime itself. The type of policing we have come to know as neighbourhood policing started life as 'reassurance policing' (Innes, 2005: 160).

Reassurance has been a central principle of policing since its inclusion in the *Police Reform Act 2002* and the *National Policing Plan 2003-2006* (Millie and Herrington,

2005: 42). While crime may be falling, there is no parallel fall in the fear of crime nor rise in its inverse, 'reassurance'. Reassurance policing is thus part of wider move within public service provision whereby the provider attempts to give the public what they want, in this case a freedom from anxiety.

There are numerous ways to define reassurance policing and the very elasticity of its definition is, Innes (2004b: 157) argues, an advantage: 'It was precisely the lack of a tightly structured definition that allowed the idea to gain significant levels of support from different interest groups and thus helped to propel it "up" the political agenda.' Innes goes on to give two definitions of reassurance policing. The first stemming from the 'Thematic Inspection' report by the Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) which defines reassurance as an outcome that is derived from engaging certain policing activities in order to produce a sense of order and security (Povey, 2001). The second definition Innes proposes is that used by the NRPP whose objective is to provide enhanced 'neighbourhood security'. Both definitions are driven by concepts of 'security' with its future-oriented promises of risk reduction.

In an effort to provide the latter type of reassurance, the NRPP set about increasing police foot patrols in pilot areas. This was with the aim of increasing 'visibility, accessibility and familiarity' (VAF) as described by the HMIC in their report. However, bearing in mind that the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) experiments found that it was not the increase in foot patrols that were effective, but the quality of the police-public interaction which made the difference (Skogan and Hartnett, 1998). It was this emphasis on the quality of the interface between the police and public that lead to NRPP to include SCP in its thinking. The HMIC conception of

reassurance had argued that reassurance could be provided if VAF was in place, regardless of other signifiers of crime and disorder. For this reason SCP was appropriated into the NRPP's approach (Innes, 2004b: 162). This, argues Innes (ibid: 167), is an intelligent approach to increasing people's sense of security.

Partnership, CDRPs and *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*

One of the initial aims of the Metropolitan Police in 1829 was to reduce crime. The theory it seems was that this would take place by providing a body of guardians upon the streets who would be able to catch criminals and bring them to justice. This punishment, along with their presence on the streets should deter others. However, even this role has been challenged by historians of the police (Emsley, 2001). The police continue to have a role in society's efforts to prevent crime, but the notions of what 'crime prevention' is have changed substantially over time. In much the same way that various 'eras' (Kelling and Moore, 1988) or 'waves' (Wood and Shearing, 2007) of dominant and fashionable perspectives on policing have come and gone over time, notions of crime prevention have also changed. These phases have developed;

[F]rom the unfocused and theoretically uninformed form that predominated from the 1950s, to the 'crisis' of criminal justice in the mid-1970s; to the situational model that came to the fore from the mid-1970s to mid-1980s; to the more holistic and ideologically manipulable community safety and crime reduction model which has held sway from the late 1980s onwards. (Hughes, 2006a: 68)

These different phases, like the various historical phases of policing are not actually neatly distinct. There is a continuous application of ideas from different phases to work conducted in other eras. The important thing to note, for the purposes of this work, is that crime prevention is a concept that is changing and adapting all the time. This may be driven by new technologies or new types of crimes or by changes in the theories and philosophies that inspire politicians and policy-makers.

There is now a growing consensus in the UK that the best form of crime prevention is one which takes an 'inter-agency' approach and works on issues beyond simply crime itself but wider social problems. Inter-agency work is a step beyond the more familiar 'multi-agency' partnerships in that the latter involves merely doing the same tasks in cooperation with others while the former demands a shift in working practices that goes towards more dovetailed work that could be considered collaborative or interdependent than merely cooperative (Crawford and Matassa, 2000: 104).

The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* was a significant piece of legislation in the area of crime prevention because it created specific statutory powers and duties for a range of agencies and local authorities. The Act places a duty on local councils and the police to work with a wide range of other agencies from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to develop and implement strategies to reduce crime and disorder' (Crawford, 2007: 894). 376 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) were established and are obliged to conduct a triennial audit of crime and disorder in their localities, consult the community and respond in an appropriately strategic manner (Home Office, 1998). CDRPs enjoyed an initial period of success and promise, but the work of partnership has been heavily criticised since. The strength of

the police agenda in the partnership has led other partners to be reluctant to fully engage with the process and the dream of 'inter-agency' working may be a long way from becoming the reality. It seems that while it may be one thing to enact the framework for partnership, 'the ability to co-ordinate the responsibilities and work of different administrative departments in such a fashion as a matter of routine appears to be much harder to engineer'. (Innes, 2005: 165)

The problems facing partnership operations are particularly pertinent to this research and will be discussed further in later chapters. The work of local partnerships is central to neighbourhood policing. This work in its efforts to engage community and provide solutions to problems, be they of crime, fear of crime or antisocial behaviour is affected by all the theoretical and practical concerns raised in these first two chapters. It is this complexity of issues which relate to neighbourhood policing that make it such an interesting field of study but it also makes it difficult to research. The next chapter will discuss some of the issues around conducting research on neighbourhood policing.

Conclusion

This chapter has brought together a number of different approaches to contextualizing and analyzing neighbourhood policing. These strands may appear to be somewhat disparate however it is essential to have considered them in order to locate neighbourhood policing within an appropriate conceptual framework. It is argued throughout this thesis that a nodal governance of security perspective is a useful analytical tool when trying to understand the NAG operating as the central problem-solving group within the neighbourhood policing strategy. This strategy is faced with

a substantial amount of expectation in so far as it is expected to reduce *inter alia*: crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as to increase reassurance, legitimacy and accountability. Yet these concepts are slippery and hard to pin down. Each is surrounded with its own set of debates and in order to understand neighbourhood policing and the NAGs role within that, each of these notions has to be unpicked. Otherwise it is difficult to understand the forces, interconnections and dynamics which effect the NAG as a 'node' of security governance.

The next chapter looks at issues relating to how neighbourhood policing can be and has been researched. It also looks at how this research went about approaching the NAG and its role in neighbourhood policing. The later chapters will then develop on the themes set out above as they relate to the two case study neighbourhoods which were studied.

Chapter 3

Doing Research on Neighbourhood Policing

‘The precise nature of all [research] difficulties and the strategies which might help overcome them, vary according to the characteristics of the researcher, and her relationship to the police.’ (Reiner, 2000b: 220)

The previous chapters have laid out some of the debates which surround the sociological and political setting within which neighbourhood policing operates. Each of these debates has an impact on the research process when conducting any type of study of neighbourhood policing. Every problem of definition faced by the police in constructing neighbourhoods and communities, defining problems, developing connections with the ‘community’ or gathering ‘intelligence’ is a complicating factor for the researcher investigating neighbourhood policing. This chapter teases out some of those factors and tries to explain the impact they had on research decisions in the instant research. Virtually every research decision in the social sciences is the result of some set of forces or influences and understanding these is crucial to understanding the outcome of the research.

Previous Research on Community Policing

Before discussing research on community policing itself, it is worth discussing the historical development of police research that led up to the development of community policing and thus the research into it. Reiner (2000b) describes four historical phases of police research which have affected the style of research work that has been carried out on the police. Although police research in the UK began in

the 1960s and the advocacy of strategies of community policing did not appear until the 1970s, the earlier phases necessarily influenced the later work and help place the research on community policing into context.

The earliest research on policing is usually credited to have been Banton's (1964) *The Policeman in the Community*, which is described by Reiner as 'framed within a celebratory mode' and 'clear exemplification of the *consensus* stage of police research' (2000b: 213). This consensus was severely challenged by the police research of the 1960s and 1970s in Britain. Substantial social changes (increased difference and reduced deference in British society, to paraphrase Reiner) created an environment that allowed academic (and indeed other forms of police research) to challenge the traditional notions about the police. Political protest and allegations of police corruption set the stage for the *controversy* phase of police research, a phase that largely produced research critical of police practices while much government conducted research was pointing out the limitations of policing in terms of reducing crime. This phase perhaps resonated with the 'nothing works' atmosphere which was typical of much criminological research at the time (Hughes, 2001: 271). The fourth phase of research is called the *contradictory* phase. This was ostensibly committed to 'realism' and perhaps part of a movement away from 'grand theory'. Two contrasting approaches appeared during this phase. The fields of research known as 'left realism' on the one hand (Lea and Young, 1984), which contrasted sharply with the 'administrative criminology' of policy makers in the UK and the 'New Right' realism which was influential in the US at the time (Tierney, 2006: 234-235). Some of the work which was conducted during this contradictory phase is evidence of a shift away from more theoretical and critical works towards research with a broad policy impact.

As such, police research can possibly be seen to have become very evaluation oriented, seeking best practice and perhaps 'value for money'.

It was against this backdrop of searching for innovative strategies and creating best practice that,

'Community policing' became a fashionable rubric around the world (Skolnick and Bayley, 1986; Fielding, 1995). It offered to unite the earlier concerns with accountability and the new concern with effective policing: accountability was for good, effective policing, which could only be achieved through cultivating community consent (Reiner, 2000b: 215-216).

This fashionable innovation in policing arose out of the evidence-led realization that old police tactics are ineffective in reducing crime. In order to fight rising crime, there was a need to create innovative responses. Community policing was one of those responses. The other main response advocated, forming perhaps a polar opposite to community policing, was the notion of aggressive patrol and crackdowns. The synthesis of both these techniques has led to what could be considered a spectrum of policing responses from community-oriented, to law and order oriented (Reiner, 2000a: 121). Since then the bulk of research into community policing has been in the nature of evaluating how successful (or not) any individual community policing initiative is. Some projects such as that conducted by Skogan and Hartnett (1998) worked with the police in devising and implementing the community policing initiative and then went on to evaluate it.

Other evaluation works have been *ex post facto* evaluations of initiatives which the police have conducted themselves and the researcher has attempted to evaluate afterwards (for example Smyth, 2002).

Evaluation techniques are largely based on, or aspire to be as close as possible to, traditional positivist approaches to social science. These techniques often derived from the natural sciences (Parr and Silva, 2005) and as such aspire to an objectivity and thus significance which is associated with the epistemological techniques espoused by so-called 'positivist' criminologists and social researchers (Bottoms, 2000: 26). This positivist outlook tends to favour experimental styles of assessing if a technique or intervention is successful or not. However this highly positivist approach to the search for authoritative sociological knowledge (Redman, 2005) may not be the best way to evaluate neighbourhood policing. What quantity would a researcher count to analyse if a neighbourhood had benefitted from neighbourhood policing? How would the causal relationship between the policing and the benefit be established? What are the problems a positivist must overcome in evaluating neighbourhood policing? What techniques would she use?

In answering these questions a positivist evaluator must rely on the scientific techniques available to them. The random controlled test is thus the 'holy-grail' or 'gold-standard' of the positivist evaluator. This is perhaps exemplified in the University of Maryland overview of crime evaluation studies (Sherman *et al.*, 1998) which was conducted for the US Congress as a review of 'what works' in crime prevention. Each type of intervention was evaluated based on the type of

study conducted on it. If it was evaluated by a random controlled test, the evaluation scored '5'. The lower scores were assigned based on research designs and threats to internal validity set out in what the authors rather grandly call the Maryland Scale of Scientific Methods (ibid: 21). The paper then goes on to set out which interventions do and do not work based on the level of 'scientific' support they have garnered. Thus they categorize the interventions under four headings; 'what works', 'what doesn't work', 'what's promising' and 'what's unknown'. Tilley is exceptionally sceptical of this reliance on scientific evaluation, stating that '[t]he result is in my opinion dangerous nonsense' (2001: 87). This is because such evaluations forget (or ignore) the fact that an intervention's effectiveness is 'dependent on circumstances'. The success of an intervention in Brixton does not mean it will automatically be a success in Hackney or Whitechapel. In order to understand the potential influence a success-story should have on future policy-making, it is essential to have a strong theoretical understanding of why the intervention was a success. Indeed it is this exact tailoring of the policing response to the local priorities in a manner best suited to a particular neighbourhood context that is at the heart of the theoretical reasoning behind why neighbourhood policing should be a success. To impose a centrally mandated intervention on a neighbourhood because it has been evaluated to be a success in other locations, may be to undermine the very advantages of responsiveness and flexibility which neighbourhood policing as an innovative policing strategy provides.

Tilley goes on to point out that overviews of evaluation, such as the Maryland Scale of Scientific Method, regularly unearth inconsistent findings. These inconsistencies bedevil efforts to find out whether such measures do or do not

work. Because such studies do not try and tease out the reasons why an intervention works in one context but not another, they run the risk of finding that an intervention does not work at all because there are so many conflicting results. To put this statement in terms relating to neighbourhood policing, it seems likely that neighbourhood policing will not 'work' in all neighbourhoods for all the measures on which it can be analysed. It also seems likely that it may 'work' for some measures in some contexts. So any evaluative research on neighbourhood policing has to try and explain not only if it 'worked' but also what is the context in which it was applied, and how did that context affect the success or failure of the strategy. This type of analysis is made even more complex by the fact that, despite central governmental aspirations to control and manage force and BCU performances, there is no single 'one size fits all' 'cookie-cutter' approach to neighbourhood policing. Each NAG, police officer and partner brings a different perspective and set of skills to the problems of their neighbourhood. In neighbourhood policing evaluating why something works is probably harder than evaluating if it works.

In response to this problem, Pawson and Tilley (1997) formulated an alternative type of evaluation that they called 'realistic evaluation'. This is a development of what they had previously referred to as 'scientific realist evaluation' (Pawson and Tilley, 1994: 300). In essence this is an approach to evaluation that looks at 'understanding how programmes and policies bring about different effects in different places among different people' (Tilley, 2001: 91). The realistic evaluator is concerned with 'what works for whom in what circumstances, and how?' This is substantially different to the traditional evaluative researcher's question of

‘what works’ or even ‘what always works’. Realistic evaluation may be in a position to provide useful insights into neighbourhood policing and at least some of its reasoning and techniques have been applied to the instant research.

Despite all the methodological questions and the epistemological uncertainty attached to evaluation in any area of social policy, the current New Labour administration in the UK favours an evidence-led approach to policy provision in the criminal justice system and other areas of social policy. This is a laudable approach to policy-making in many ways. Who could fault a government who only wanted to do things for its public that ‘worked’ or were at least ‘evidence-led’? However all evidence in social science (and perhaps even in some of the natural sciences, although that is something of a tangent (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997)) is socially constructed (see chapter 2 for a review of some of the discussions of this idea in the context of official crime figures). Any data set appears at the end of a process of collection and, since all data on a topic cannot ever possibly be collected, any data set presented is automatically a selection. Thus ‘[p]olicy that is led by available evidence risks focusing on the easily measurable simply because it is easily measurable’ (Tilley, 2001). As CDRPs are mandated under the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* to evaluate their interventions, they ‘can be persuaded to try and assemble and warehouse more and more data in the belief that they will tell them what to do. But the data cannot and will not do so’ (ibid: 84). This is not to say that evidence cannot inform research. It is a warning that data and evidence have to be treated very carefully when used in any area of social policy, criminology or police studies.

The Present Research

This research took place over the course of approximately eighteen months. The central tenet of the research methodology was an ethnography of two NAGs (detailed in chapters 4 and 5) as they developed over the course of the research. The NAG at Neighbourhood A was established before the research began and so it was possible to attend the meetings over a longer period of time. The NAG at Neighbourhood B was established during the course of the research and so could not be studied for as long. I also attended NAG meetings in two other neighbourhoods, one in another city and one in another part of the BCU studied. Each meeting lasted one and a half hours and I was able to take contemporaneous notes throughout. I also stayed behind for some time and talked informally with participants about the process of problem-solving, neighbourhood policing and NAGs in general. In total I attended approximately twenty NAGs over the course of 18 months. This added up to almost forty hours of ethnographic fieldwork.

Alongside these NAGs I also attended training days run by the Thames Valley Police and the Thames Valley Partnership. These were full length training days intended to provide those at the 'coalface' of neighbourhood policing with the skills and background information required to implement the neighbourhood policing agenda. The former took place at the TVP headquarters in Kiddlington and was for police officers and PCSOs who were to be appointed to neighbourhood policing duties. The second training day was for partnership agencies. During both training days I was able to make contemporaneous notes, speak to officers and partners. I did not participate in workshops, although I did attend them and in the case of the partnership training day,

I was asked by the organizers to produce a summary of the workshop I attended on media relations and neighbourhood policing.

The final ethnographic component of the research involved attending a morning of intelligence briefings at the main police station in the BCU. This comprised two meetings, one of community partners (called a Tasking and Co-ordination Group) who were attempting to co-ordinate their information into usable intelligence and a later Joint Tactics and Tasking Committee meeting. I was able to take contemporaneous notes and observe the proceedings, in a similar fashion to the NAGs I attended. Between this morning and the two training days, a further 20 hours of ethnographic fieldwork was added to the research.

Alongside the ethnography I conducted a series of interviews and held a set of meetings with senior police officers within the TVP. I tape recorded interviews with eight people. Three were senior officers in the force who were charged with rolling out the neighbourhood policing process. Two further interviews were with representatives of the NPIA who were providing support to forces as they were rolling out neighbourhood policing in their areas. I conducted an interview with the first appointed chair of each NAG. Finally, I also conducted an interview with the safer neighbourhood coordinator who had responsibility for establishing NAGs in the thirty-two neighbourhoods within the BCU. As well as these semi-structured, recorded interviews, I met with senior officers in the force and discussed the issues of rolling out neighbourhood policing. I had extended meetings three times at the central police station and twice at the OU.

When the research was beginning I initially spent time considering the question of how to measure the effectiveness of neighbourhood policing. However it became apparent that this question was perhaps too broad and overlapped substantially with evaluative work the police themselves were doing. For these reasons I began to consider the themes of policing theory such as problem-oriented policing and intelligence-led policing and how they worked in neighbourhood policing generally and within NAGs specifically. I also wanted to consider how much connection or engagement the process and the NAG had with the community. The discussions in the following chapters are the fruits of those inquiries and derive from these methods of researching the NAG and neighbourhood policing.

When this study began in 2005 neighbourhood policing was a relatively new incarnation of the much more established notion of 'community policing'. The concept was being initiated by central government as a new reform in how policing is to be delivered across England and Wales. This left open a lot of questions, such as how would neighbourhood policing be evaluated? How would the process fit in with the demands on the police for traditional response or 'fire-brigade' policing? Will the problem-solving process work as planned by middle-managers? The list of possible questions is endless. Choosing the right research question immediately at the start appeared almost impossible, so it seemed feasible to conduct two case studies of different neighbourhoods undergoing different stages in the roll-out of neighbourhood policing. This allowed for a picture of the process of initiating a major change in policing to be described. Furthermore the problems and successes could be critically analyzed and considered in a theoretical framework. The logical site for these case-studies were neighbourhoods as they had been defined by the police themselves.

Within each neighbourhood, the biggest and most obvious new development was the creation of Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs). These are, according to the TVP:

[V]olunteer working groups made up of representatives from the community. They will include residents, the police, local authority and other organizations, such as local businesses and schools.

They are key to the success of neighbourhood policing as it is this group who will plan on behalf of the community and organize for tasks to be completed. In effect, they are the 'doers' accountable locally for responding to problems a community wants to tackle. (Thames Valley Police, 2006)

Thus the NAG was to be the central location for working on the neighbourhood's priorities and attempting to work in partnership to solve them. It was decided that the best way to understand the complex relationships between the partners (including the police, local residents and other stakeholders) would be to conduct an ethnography of the NAGs in the case study areas. Coupling this with a selection of interviews of key NAG members and police officers in the local setting would allow for a greater perspective to be obtained than from attending the NAGs themselves.

Choosing the case study neighbourhoods was not a simple task. The TVP had two pilot neighbourhoods that were up and running. These neighbourhoods were on two opposing ends of the 'deprivation index' used by the police and as such had substantially different policing 'requirements'. However both were considerably

further along the process of local consultation and problem-solving than the other neighbourhoods in the BCU. To study the two pilots would have been a logical approach. They are contrasting neighbourhoods upon which the template of neighbourhood policing was being imposed and perhaps the comparisons could be illuminating. However, there were two major problems with this. Firstly, both are pilot areas. This means that both receive more attention than could reasonably be expected to be received by any one neighbourhood if all the neighbourhoods are to be operating at the same time. This would mean that the isolation of the neighbourhoods in the time-scale of the roll-out might make their study almost completely non-transferrable. Secondly, as both pilot NAGs are further along in the process, a case study of both would not allow for any study of the earlier stages of the roll-out. For example, to start by studying two established NAGs it would be hard to gain an understanding of the methods used to define the problems and to initiate the NAGs. Similar difficulties would arise in trying to understand the problems of moving on the partnership work of co-producing community safety. To study two more established NAGs would ring somewhat hollow if it was not possible to understand the process by which the NAG's objectives and thus operative notions and preconceptions were derived. Coming into a NAG late does not allow the observer to explain what were the politics behind defining a problem. The definition of a problem has an impact in a locality in that efforts to resolve it will have an impact on how police and agency resources are used in that area. This means that the definition of problems in neighbourhood policing can become political (albeit perhaps political in the small 'p' sense). To conduct a study of a new process of policing and ignore the methods which were used to determine what the main priorities of that process are, seems somewhat

short sighted. At the very least it accepts the process of determining priorities in an uncritical manner.

It seemed that the best compromise was to look at one of the established pilot NAGs and a new NAG which was just starting out. This way it would be possible to observe the process of defining local problems from the very start in one neighbourhood (Neighbourhood B in this research), while the research in the other neighbourhood (Neighbourhood A) could observe the workings of a NAG that had established itself and was 'getting on with the job'. Neighbourhood A is the older, more established NAG and meetings had been attended for some months before the consultation process for Neighbourhood B began. However, in this work, the neighbourhoods are described in the order that events within them would take place if the two neighbourhoods formed one unified 'story'. So Neighbourhood B's story of consultation with the public and the establishment of the NAG is told before Neighbourhood A's story of working towards mitigating the problems that they have found to be of most concern to their public. The 'story' of the NAGs in the Thames Valley is thus told in a time-line that is not in fact true (many of the events in Neighbourhood A took place before Neighbourhood B was up and running), but rather as it might happen in one NAG; consultation of publics, formation of NAG, brainstorming, problem-solving and partnership working.

I attended NAGs in Neighbourhood A for a period stretching over approximately eighteen months and at Neighbourhood B for a period of approximately twelve months. I also visited two other NAGs, one in the second pilot within the BCU, which is briefly referred to in this text as Neighbourhood C, and one in another BCU in the

constabulary. This NAG was visited to get a sense of how the NAG process would apply outside the BCU in which the two case-study neighbourhoods were located.

As well as studying NAGs, I attended a number of training days for officers who were being trained in the implementation of neighbourhood policing. I also attended a full day training session for partners in the Thames Valley run by the Thames Valley Partnership, where the TVP explained the process of neighbourhood policing and the central role of the NAG to their main potential partners. I also attended an intelligence briefing day (held fortnightly in the BCU) which comprised both the Joint Tactics and Tasking Committee meeting and the Tasking and Co-ordination Group, this was in order to see how the intelligence gathered at a local level feeds up into the greater intelligence structures used centrally by the police.

In parallel with the ethnography of the case study NAGs, I conducted a number of interviews with key informants who it was felt would have a good insight into the local and national experience of rolling out and implementing neighbourhood policing. To this end I interviewed chairs of both case study NAGs, senior police officers in the TVP, a representative of the council in which the case study neighbourhoods are located, the coordinator of the community safety partnership for the area which includes the two neighbourhoods, and representatives from the National Policing Improvement Agency who have responsibility for supporting police forces in implementing neighbourhood policing. This is clearly not a huge amount of interviews. Indeed many criminal justice research projects interview hundreds of informants (see for example the study of juvenile delinquency in London conducted by Farrington, 2002). However the intention of conducting interviews was to

supplement the ethnographic data which was collected at NAGs and other police events with an investigation of the perspectives of key informants.

Interviewees were chosen to try to get a view of the different perspectives at the table. Thus it was important to interview a chair from each case study neighbourhood. It was similarly important to look beyond the police themselves and speak to partner agencies and this was why the council representative was interviewed. Finally, it was considered essential to speak to the police managers at TVP, and the NPIA to find out how they perceived the neighbourhood policing process as they worked on it, at a force and national level. This research is an attempt to use those perspectives to assist in understanding the experiences observed as part of the ethnography.

There is no attempt to create a quantitative description of how well the process is perceived among a broad group of people. The purpose of the interviews, which were digitally recorded with the interviewees' consent, was to conduct a detailed discussion of the roll-out process. The interviews were detailed and provided rich data which could be discussed at great depth and this discussion informs the bulk of the empirical analysis in chapters 6 and 7.

As well as the formal interviews, I conducted numerous informal discussions with people who I met at NAGs, or at other points in my fieldwork. Some people wanted to say things 'off the record' or completely anonymously and so did not wish to be interviewed in a formal, recorded setting. Others were happy to do recorded interviews, but were concerned about their anonymity being preserved. It is in order to respect this desire for privacy, which was an essential part of some participants'

consent to be interviewed, that the names of the BCU, the case study neighbourhoods and the key informants are all anonymized.

After NAG meetings were finished there was a good opportunity for informal discussions with participants about how they felt the meetings were going and what their expectations were. These comments, which have never been directly quoted or attributed, were recorded in the field notes for the research and have helped inform the arguments in this work.

Further data was provided by the TVP in the form of quantitative analysis conducted by their own internal statisticians. Although this work is mainly a qualitative ethnography, there are certain points in the text where statistics are referred to. As discussed in the previous chapter, the quantification of crime is a hotly contested area of research and it is not intended to re-visit those debates here. The police collect vast quantities of data and it informs their work significantly. This is part of a target culture which operates throughout the criminal justice system (McLaughlin and Muncie, 2000) and almost all areas of the public sector. Such dependence on quantifiable targets thus informs police perspectives and cannot be ignored, even by the researcher hoping to conduct an ethnographic research work.

Internally collected police data are used in a number of ways in the context of neighbourhood policing. Such data informs *inter alia* the deprivation index used by the police to help decide on which neighbourhoods are to be classified as Priority, Enhanced or Capable neighbourhoods. This, along with other factors, affected how soon neighbourhood policing was to be rolled out to that neighbourhood. Reported

crime data can also be collected specifically for each neighbourhood and this further helps to classify neighbourhoods according to the levels of crime they are experiencing, or at least reporting. NAGs themselves were observed using such data themselves (see the discussions in chapters 4 and 5 below). As part of the research I spoke to the internal civilian staff at the TVP who compile the data on the case study neighbourhoods and was provided with any data that I asked for about the two neighbourhoods. The theme of quantification of crime, measuring progress and providing proof of success is referred to throughout the work and for that reason it is important to use (and be aware of the short-comings of) the data which is collected by the TVP themselves.

The data collected was recorded in field notes for the ethnography component and the informal interviews. The formal interviews were recorded and transcribed, while something of a substantial file of data provided by the TVP statisticians was also collected. It is upon this body of recorded data that this research is based.

Before moving on to discuss some of the problems encountered in the execution of this research it is worth briefly trying to place the research within one of the categories of police research that theorists have tried to define. Brown (1996) argued that there were four types of police researcher, based on a two by two matrix of whether the researcher was an insider (ie a police officer) and whether the researcher had approached their research from inside or outside the police organization. Although, within the police appears to include central government as well as the force itself. This matrix produces four possible types of police researcher; *inside insiders*, *outside insiders*, *inside outsiders* and *outside outsiders*. Each of them will have a

different experience of researching the police because of the relationship that they have with the policing establishment and the people they are studying due to their status as insiders and their institutional background.

Inside insiders are typically police officers conducting research either for themselves (eg for a degree) or for the force or other governmental institution. They typically have much reduced problems of obtaining formal access due to their position as officers. However, it must be remembered that the process of negotiating access is constantly evolving. Inside insiders often still experience problems building trust at this stage of negotiating (and perhaps constantly renegotiating) 'secondary access'. This may be because, for example, they are often senior officers who are treated suspiciously by those they are studying. *Outside insiders* on the other hand are former police officers who, upon retirement or resignation, go on to publish academic works on their experiences. Acting as covert participant observers during their time in the force they use that experience as the data upon which to base their analysis. Obviously, being located in the force already, formal access is not a problem. Secondary access is then dependent on the researcher's role in the force and their bonds of trust with their colleagues and perhaps the perspectives on the force they already hold. The outside insider can turn out research that could allow her to be described as anything from 'spy to propagandist' (Reiner, 2000b: 221). *Inside outsiders* are those who work within the force or other government agency, but are not officers. They are perhaps similar to inside insiders in that they enjoy good formal access but may have difficulty building the trust relationships required for secondary access. This may be perhaps because officers know that their findings may have more immediate policy impacts than those found by complete outsiders. This final category

of *outside outsider* is the one into which most academic research falls. It may fall at the hurdle of having its formal access removed or completely denied and may suffer from difficulties in building trust and renegotiating secondary access. However the outside outsider may be able to gain the trust of police officers who would be adverse to speaking with insiders or who think that academic research doesn't really matter anyway.

Fitting the current research into Brown's typology is not a perfect science. As discussed below, this project was partially funded by the police and as such formal access was relatively straightforward. In that sense it feels like the category of *inside outsider* may be the best location for the research. However, in terms of building relationships within the research environment, it is posited that many of those who were subject to the research were unconcerned about the outsider/insider divide or considered me to be an independent academic researcher (which I am, in all but funding, see below). As is often the case with the typology based on the two by two matrix, all examples do not fit neatly into the schema. In this case, there are perhaps aspects of both the *inside outsider* and *outside outsider* which apply to this research.

Problems Arising from the Present Research

No criminological research occurs exactly as planned. There are too many potential complicating factors which affect the way in which the research takes place. Every decision to research or observe one event has an opportunity cost. In deciding to look at one aspect of neighbourhood policing, time and work load means that some other aspect of it is not researched, or at least not researched as thoroughly. Nobody has attempted to tell the holistic story of neighbourhood policing, and to do so would be

virtually impossible. The process of deciding on what was to be the subject of this research has taken place partially as a result of conscious intellectual investigation, but also due to the experiences on the ground. In that sense the research is closer in character to a 'response-to-a-constantly-changing-and-developing-environment', than to a carefully thought out social scientific experiment. The process was shaped by some of the problems discussed below, such as access and the need to strike a balance between being too participatory and too distant.

Problems of Access

Many researchers studying criminal justice go through difficult initial problems gaining access (Baldwin, 2000: 237; Davies, 2000: 86-88; Martin, 2000: 222-223; Rawlinson, 2000: 353). In many ways, the traditional problems of access that many criminal justice researchers experience was circumvented somewhat in this research because of the fact that the project was co-funded by the TVP. The ethical implications of such police funding of research are discussed below, however, in the context of gaining access to the process of neighbourhood policing, the fact that the research was funded by the police (and ergo something the police were at least somewhat interested in) made the process of gaining access a lot more straightforward. The TVP and the Open University (OU) collaborated to fund the study for which this research was conducted. The research was to be about the then relatively new, area of neighbourhood policing and the initial working title of the research was 'Measuring Outcomes in Citizen-focussed Local Policing'. As with any working title and like many nascent research projects, the name and the focus of the research has changed as the terrain in which the project functions is better understood.

The high turnover of police staff was something that initially appeared to be a likely problem for access. One example being when the very officer mentioned, who helped initiate the project, was moved to headquarters, he introduced me to his replacement and briefed him of the existence of the project and the new officer gave the same assurances that he would ensure that any access required would be provided. Although no formal use was ever made of his offer, it was very useful when meeting officers to establish contacts to be able to say that Officer X was in fact aware of the work and that it was co-funded by the TVP. In a sense it made officers at ease, that I was 'one of them' and indeed this was alluded to by an officer who was very helpful in providing contacts in other agencies to assist in gaining access.

While I was able to gain what felt like largely unfettered access to the research field, it is also important to consider that access does not end once the 'field' or 'group' has been penetrated, it must constantly be renegotiated and reconsidered (Hughes, 2000: 239-242), regardless of how little things are changing. Looking back over Brown's (1996 discussed above) *inside-outside, insider-outsider* matrix, it is clear that this secondary access, and how it is constructed, is one of the most significant difference between the four categories. This was something that is particularly interesting in the context of research on neighbourhood policing. As the high turnover of police officers continues, the researcher may need to 're-negotiate' their access to a neighbourhood. This may be as simple as saying 'I've been here since the last officer was here, nice to meet you' and carrying on. Or it may be more complicated. In one NAG, a neighbourhood officer was quite wary of allowing me to attend the meetings because he was worried that it would increase his personal workload. Once it was made clear that I would only be observing and would have negligible impact on his day-to-day

work life he was happy for me to attend. With every new neighbourhood police officer, comes a renewal of the need to build trust and at the very least re-state, if not completely re-negotiate, the access.

Such re-negotiation involves re-building trust with individual officers. In many cases with NAGs the other agency staff were more consistently present at the meetings and so very little needed to be done to build further trust with them. With police officers, who were changing relatively regularly, there was a need to be re-building the trust, almost from the start. However, I did have some advantages in that I was co-funded by the police, had the senior officer's approval and I also benefited from the fact that I fitted in to the NAG meetings already to some extent. So maintaining ongoing access to the meetings was a relatively straightforward process.

In the planning phase of the research I had to decide on which neighbourhoods I was going to study and how I was going to study them. So I arranged a meeting with the appropriate officer who was organizing the roll-out of neighbourhood policing in the BCU to discuss where they were and how it was best to study them. At this meeting I also met the coordinator of the local community safety partnership who turned out to be an essential point of access to the NAGs. She was able to assume this so-called 'gatekeeper' role because she was effectively running the BCU's process of initiating NAGs. She was helpful, efficient and professional and this made the access process very straightforward. Between the coordinator and the police officer I was provided with statistics and informal information about the progress of each of the NAGs and this allowed me to choose the two neighbourhoods for the case study. The coordinator had a huge amount of control over how the NAGs were operated and it was through

her that I was able to find out when and where they were taking place and to be introduced to the appropriate officers and chairs. If she had been remotely obstructive or difficult, access to the NAGs studied would have been substantially more troublesome.

General Problems with Ethnographies of the Police

Perhaps the greatest problem of the ethnographic method is maintaining a balance between the participant and the observer. On the one hand the ethnographer is attempting to become as involved as possible in the research, to understand the perspective of the subjects as fully as possible and to use that understanding to draw out as rich a qualitative data set as possible. Yet, the ethnographer is also trying to bring a critical eye to the project. There is nothing to be gained if a researcher merely becomes a member of the group researched, subsumes their perspectives and then describes their positions. The ethnographer in that scenario has merely become a member of the group that is being studied and no longer sustains that academic distance. So, while it is useful to become a participant to try and understand the experience of the group's members, the researcher needs to maintain a critical distance in order to locate that experience within a wider framework, whether that framework is theoretical, cultural, political, geographical, social or ecological.

The risks of going too far in one direction or the other are relatively obvious. If a researcher becomes too close to their subject, they run the risk of 'going native'. This is a notion that harks back to ethnography's roots in Nineteenth Century anthropology, which focused to a large part on the study of foreign cultures. 'Going native' in that sense is clearly a statement that an anthropologist has lost their academic distance and has become clearly entwined in the fabric of the local society, perhaps formally by marriage, or simply through becoming a regular member of the community due to the length of time that the researcher stays with the group being studied. Although 'going native' is usually more of a statement about how the academic's external perspective has been eroded, rather than the length of time they've spent in the field per se. In the

context of policing, 'going native' is a risk because it could be quite easy to become completely partial to the attitudes of those whom the researcher meets in the field, simply due to a prolonged period of exposure to their experiences, or through a lack of academic rigour in analyzing data that is produced (and the notion of data here is taken as being a very broad brush sense of the word, including everything police officers and other research subjects are observed saying or doing in the course of the research). If a police researcher has 'gone native', there is every chance that their work will merely produce a replication of the 'party line' or a restatement of administrative policy or simply the singular perspective of the research subject the researcher has had the most exposure to (Westmarland, 2001a: 9).

On the other hand, if too rigorous an objectivity is maintained, there is the opposite risk of not gaining any data that allows for any insight into the subject's perspectives. For example, an academically distant observer may never understand why a subject is acting in a particular way or why a particular event is perceived by a group to be of significance. Such research will tend towards being too speculative if it tries to describe personal motivations without understanding the individual lived experience, or even too quantitative if it merely counts the regularity of an occurrence. In the context of ethnographies of policing, this sort of distance can undermine the quality of the data collected. Perhaps by police officers not wanting to be observed or by being wary of engaging with researchers, it can be possible for a researcher to become distant from the subject of the research and become removed into a primarily theoretical perspective on their research.

This balance between the subjective participant and the objective observer is at the heart of the creative tension in any ethnography and it was certainly present in the instant research. Taking the NAG as the central focus of the study has some advantages in reducing the problems caused by the participant-observer tension. Attending NAG meetings allows the researcher to formally state who they are, thus ensuring that everybody present knows they are the subject of research. It also allows the researcher to state that they are merely an 'observer', thus establishing that they are not there to contribute tangible pieces of work or to assist in defining what the problems facing a neighbourhood are. The formal environment of a meeting with minutes, attendance, and a chair, allows the researcher to be in attendance, hear everything that all participants hear, and yet maintain a clear distance from the participants when it comes to analyzing their arguments and approaches. The researcher is not heard or involved in the meeting itself.

It is tempting to say that this clear observer status while in attendance at the meeting means that there is no impact on the subjects from the observer's presence. However, this is not necessarily the case. This can be seen from one instance when observing a Joint Tactics and Tasking Committee meeting (see chapter 7). On balance, it seems likely that the impact of the observer on the subject of the observations in this research is probably very minimal, it is always worth remembering that all those who attended NAGs (except perhaps for late attendees or those who did not show up regularly) are aware of the researcher's presence and this can have an impact. This is what is known as the 'Hawthorne effect' (Scott and Marshall, 2005: 261). It is inherently present in any ethnography of the police and indeed, by the very nature of the work of police officers, it would be almost unimaginable to be able to create a

scenario where this were not the case or where any form of experimental closure could be created (Redman, 2005: 11), and certainly any such an experiment is likely to raise serious ethical concerns.

Ethical Concerns

Any research conducted into the social world will have ethical implications insofar as the compilation of knowledge will have some impact on those who are being studied. For example an interviewer asking questions about 'quality of life' could raise the hope in the interviewee that their questioning will result in the implementation of some sort of programme to increase or improve the quality of life in some way (Rapley, 2003). The same expectation can occur with policing researchers. I spoke to an officer during my research who had been working in one of the pilot areas for the NRPP. He said that the pilot had been a huge success, but when the pilot ended and the process returned to what had previously been 'normal' policing, many residents felt that they had lost out. Their expectations had been raised. They felt they had been receiving what they considered a better style of policing and now, as the research study ended, they felt that it was being taken away from them. Any research can raise expectations or create suspicions and the researcher has to be careful when conducting the research.

The most important ethical considerations in this research relate to the research subject's understanding of the ethnography and interview process as well as the question of conducting research that is co-funded by the police. In dealing with the former concern, the approach taken was one of maximum transparency. Everybody that I spoke to or interviewed was told that I was conducting research for the OU and

TVP. Before formal interviews it was made clear to the interviewees that their identities would be kept anonymous and that they did not need to answer any questions that they were uncomfortable with and could point to the recorder if they wanted to stop the interview at any time. Police officers were generally unconcerned about being anonymized and indeed one officer jokingly said he was 'glad to hear I'm not being interviewed under caution'. Although another said he felt the police were 'more used to asking the questions'. During meetings I introduced myself as an OU researcher and made it clear that I was not a participant in the meeting. With these approaches to interviews and observation it is hoped that all participants in the research understood what was happening at all times. The application of these approaches has received ethical approval from the OU's Human Participants and Materials Ethics Committee.

The final ethical consideration to be discussed is the question of funding and its implications for academic research. Academic research is not a cheap undertaking in any discipline and although research projects in the social sciences appear to be less expensive than some of the lavish projects of the natural sciences, criminological research always comes at a price. Some researchers conduct work of a large scale on substantial budgets, and this is particularly the case for some of the classic quantitative studies in the history of criminology. Farrington's longitudinal study of young men in North London is a good example of such large scale and expensive work (Farrington, 2002). Other researchers have produced exceptional work on low budgets. A good example is Munro's work on trafficking of women for prostitution which looked at police responses to trafficking in the UK, Australia, Holland, Sweden and Italy. The research was conducted on a small grant from the Nuffield Foundation

(Munro, 2006: 322). Whilst such research is conducted on a small budget, it is nonetheless conducted on a budget. Somebody or some entity, somewhere pays something for some knowledge. That is an almost inescapable fact when it comes to doing research.

Like virtually all forms of payment, something is demanded in return. In the case of foundations or research councils, methodological rigor may allow the researcher a wide degree of academic freedom. Researchers may alternatively be able to fit their research around their working schedules and be largely free of financial constraints. However, for a large body of research there is a benefactor or patron. The motivation of that patron in funding the research may range from an altruistic support of academic research, to a statutory requirement to conduct an evaluation, to the extreme example of research conducted in order to support a particular ideological position. Whatever the motivation for funding research, the patron, like the artists' patrons of the Renaissance, hope to gain something from the research. This can lead to attempts to influence the way findings are published or even efforts to prevent them being published at all. This is famously the case in the pharmaceuticals industry where research is funded by transnational corporations with a vested interest in the outcomes of research (Angell, 2004, 2005). However, the influence of patrons extends well into the field of criminology. In a sphere as politicized as crime and justice (Cohen, 1996; Downes and Morgan, 2002), the accumulation and use of knowledge provides an opportunity to strengthen arguments and entrench political positions. For this reason, transparency about funding is an important aspect of a report on research.

This research has been partially funded by the Thames Valley Police which is the

constabulary which has jurisdiction over the areas where the research was conducted. This funding relationship has advantages and disadvantages. The clear advantage is that because the force is funding the research they are very helpful with access. This has been immensely helpful in allowing me to navigate the questions that arise from studying neighbourhood policing. The disadvantages have not been as substantial as might have been expected. The police have not been interested in seeing any interim reports, other than meeting some senior officers and discussing their work. Working on a three year research project has meant that I have been chipping away at the question of neighbourhood policing when officers have been appointed to work in neighbourhoods related to the research and then promoted or moved to other positions within the force. This movement of staff within the police allows for variation within the careers of officers, but it is the perennial problem of establishing ties between police officers and neighbourhood; police officers are not on the ground long enough to get to know the area. For the purposes of this research, such constant change seems to have provided the opportunity to work away without interference from the police. Officers are largely too busy to be concerned with the research, although any that were approached were exceptionally helpful. Abstraction and workload have meant that although the police part-funded the research, and have an interest in its outcome, they have left me to conduct it in a manner of my own choosing. The only thing that I was ever asked to do by an officer was give some feedback on community perceptions of the force as part of a report prepared for HMIC.

Perhaps this is a relatively predictable outcome. A new and untried programme such as neighbourhood policing is not a particularly contentious area of research. It is not as challenging of police 'culture' and norms as research into gender and policing

(Westmarland, 2001a), police responses to terrorism (Brodeur, 1983; Mythen and Walklate, 2006), public order (Waddington, 2007), domestic violence (Stanko, 1985 [2002]; Morash and Robinson, 2002), race relations (Bowling and Phillips, 2003), or police corruption (Westmarland, 2001b, 2005). Neighbourhood policing is often considered a 'soft' form of policing. It is an area that the police are just getting to grips with themselves and so have not yet had the chance to develop an entrenched interest in how it should be operated. Thus it seems they have less to fear from a researcher studying neighbourhood policing than one working on other forms of police research.

Conclusion

Conducting research on neighbourhood policing is an endeavour fraught with difficulties. This is for a number of reasons, which were discussed in greater depth in the first two chapters. Firstly, the field or habitus in which neighbourhood policing is played out or applied is an exceptionally subjective environment. The policy debates around the meanings of notions such as 'crime', 'community', 'anti-social behaviour' and 'policing' are complicated and illustrate the vast variety of uses to which such terms can be put. Yet the practical day-to-day application (as shall be seen in later chapters) carries on, assuming that all those who are participants in the neighbourhood policing partnership agree on what those concepts mean. This subjectivity means that many who come to work on the project will have different ideas about what they want from the experience. Some will want a reduction in 'crime', perhaps from their business or home, or damage to their agency's property. Others will want to reduce their own experiences of 'fear of crime' and wish to feel safe. Others will want to find a parking space or have dog mess cleared up promptly.

Police officers may want to gather intelligence on potential terrorists or they may simply want to tick the box of 'involvement in neighbourhood policing' on their CV. There is a veritable potpourri of possibilities for neighbourhood policing, depending on one's perspective. This variety inherently means that there is a wide diversity of ways in which neighbourhood policing can be researched or evaluated, depending on which of the possibilities the evaluator or researcher considers to be most important. There is also an equally wide variety of ways in which neighbourhood policing can be deemed a success or a failure.

While there has been some critical and theoretical work on community policing, the bulk of the research that has been carried out has been evaluative. Some research was involved in the early days of designing community policing as an innovative strategy of improvement. Policing was facing problems as research was finding that it was not as effective in fighting crime as was traditionally held to be the case. However most research on community policing has tended to make efforts to analyse if the application of community policing has had any effect, and if so, whether the effect was positive or negative. This has usually focused on crime levels, but some studies have looked at fear of crime and value for money as well. Evaluative research can be a dangerous business if it focuses too much on the intervention and outcome without looking into 'how' the outcome came about. Many studies, particularly those conducted by government agencies and administrative criminologists have focused on value for money and attempts to bring about reductions in crime and increases in public satisfaction with the police in the cheapest way possible. Yet every crime reduction intervention is a victim of its circumstances and in order for 'transportable' (or 'transposable') lessons to be learnt, the context in which the intervention takes

place must be understood. Virtually no intervention works in all situations. It is the detailed description and understanding of why, where and for whom an intervention works that will produce the greatest understanding of how to apply the myriad of possible resources used by neighbourhood policing to the equally complicated set of possible environments in which it has to operate.

This disconnect between the critical or theoretical academic perspective on evaluation and the administrative approach begs the question, 'how *useful* is academic research in informing policy debates?' The next question might then be 'how often is academic research actually *used* in policy formation?' The dichotomy between the two approaches to research, categorized as part of the *contradictory* phase of police research (discussed earlier in this chapter), is one which police researchers and criminologists must grapple with when conducting their work. Who is its audience? Is it enough to produce critical works that provide insights into the criminal justice system but are completely ignored by the administrators who could 'benefit' most from them? If not, is the most 'worthwhile' research that which has a tangible policy impact? Sometimes it may seem to the academic criminologist that they are speaking an almost entirely different language to the formulators of policy. A language which appears to belie an unconventional way of thinking in an exotic culture (Canter, 2004).

While the current research does not provide concrete answers to these difficult questions, it does raise interesting questions about the role of *inside outsider* and *outside outsider* research in policing. This research has attempted to grapple with the problems described in this chapter by taking a mixed method approach to two case

study neighbourhoods. By conducting an ethnography of the NAGs in each neighbourhood and attempting to triangulate the data found using interviews with a wide range of stakeholders and supplementing it with the police's own research on the areas, it is hoped that the picture painted can be useful in describing the 'how' in addition to the 'how well' of the neighbourhood policing in the case study areas. This is in spite of the fact that conducting research on neighbourhood policing often makes the researcher feel like they are trying to build a research project in epistemological quicksand.

Chapter 4

Case Study of Neighbourhood B – Public Consultation and the Construction of the NAG

This is the first of two case-study chapters which describe the data collected in the ethnographical component of the research. The NAG at Neighbourhood B was formed much later than that at Neighbourhood A, and as a result the observations in Neighbourhood A produced data on the later part of the roll-out process. By the time observations began there, the priority problems had been established and interventions were beginning to be implemented to try to solve or ameliorate them. In Neighbourhood B however, the observations date right from the start of the roll-out process. Thus they include the initial consultations between the police, agencies and members of the public in Neighbourhood B. For that reason, Neighbourhood B is described first, as it was observed at a ‘younger’ period in its development, including the initial public meetings, the formation of the NAG and some of the early efforts made to apply procedures such as the Problem Analysis Triangle (PAT) and the Scanning Analysis Response Assessment (SARA) method to the problems that were prioritized.

In the plan produced by the TVP for rolling out the implementation of neighbourhood policing in the BCU where this research took place, each neighbourhood was given one of three grades: Priority Neighbourhood (P) which needed a higher level of resources; Enhanced Neighbourhood (E) which needed a medium level of resources; and Capable Neighbourhoods (C) which needed a lower level of resources. According to the TVP’s definition;

The category of each Neighbourhood is calculated by a formula incorporating levels of crimes and incidents, including by head of population, and index of deprivation. By use of this formula, a comparative score is resulted, allowing for the determination of a score to allocate resources from all agencies involved.

Neighbourhood B was given a score of 10 and a grade of P while Neighbourhood A was given a score of 11, which was the second highest score received by any neighbourhood in the BCU and was thus given a grade of P. Neighbourhood C, the other pilot area scored 5, which made it the second lowest score and gave it a grade of C.

The pilot rollout of the neighbourhood policing model in Neighbourhoods A and C began in April 2005. The next neighbourhood roll out (which included Neighbourhood B) did not begin until September 2006 and the rollout of the final neighbourhood was completed in February 2008.

The chapter shows concrete examples of police, residents and other partners working within the complex subjectivities which have been discussed in chapters 1 and 2. The subjectivities of definitions of 'crime', 'neighbourhood', 'anti-social behaviour' and 'community' form the lived experience in which the NAG must operate and work on its priority problems. Deciding to prioritize a set of problems is an inherently political process which can lead to decisions being made on how to utilize scarce police and partner resources within the neighbourhood. How to include the views of those who are less vocal, yet equally interested or affected by the problems in the neighbourhood is a difficult balancing act. One that police have largely been doing on their own as 'street corner

politicians' (Muir, 1977) since time immemorial. The process of balancing it out in a formal manner, with public meetings and consultations with other stakeholders opens the process up to greater scrutiny and demonstrates the difficulties of getting that balance right in providing community safety 'services' to the smorgasbord of potential community safety 'consumers'.

If one attempts to look at a NAG as a node of security governance, this chapter is useful in providing evidence of how the initial aims of the node are constructed and how this affects the development of interventions to try and achieve those aims. The process of consultation is a political one and the node itself is a political forum for some of its members, albeit politics with something of a small 'p'. How a node decides on what it is about will naturally have a major impact on how it tries to operate. This chapter draws on the ethnographic data to describe the development of the NAG in Neighbourhood B as a node of security governance, and discusses some of the problems it faces in getting up and running.

Neighbourhood B

Neighbourhood B is a conglomeration of two distinct areas with two distinct central focal points: Omega Town and Gamma Town. The two areas are separated by a substantial road and crossings between the two can be made on foot using a number of subways.

Omega Town is substantially bigger than Gamma Town and has less housing that was built by the local council. It is a Victorian town and still has many buildings from the era, and the accompanying small streets. There is a central square with a small modern shopping centre and a number of shops and pubs within the central area. Gamma Town on the other

hand has substantially more council built housing and a much smaller central focal point, which comprises of a small number of shops, a school and a family centre.

The two areas have a separate and distinct local identity and this has sometimes led to a situation where the work of the NAGs has felt separated in its focus. In the process of rolling out neighbourhood policing, the police have had to consider where to draw the boundaries of any individual neighbourhood. As discussed in chapter 1, the division of any urban area into neighbourhoods and finding appropriate areas of 'commonality' can be fraught with difficulty. In the case of Neighbourhood B, the problem, if it is sufficiently serious to be called a 'problem', is that the designation of the area into a neighbourhood has included two distinct and different areas of commonality. Thus it is not a case of a disparate community being broken up, or a neighbourhood being contrived artificially from within a wider pluralist whole. In the case of Neighbourhood B the difficulty is that within the boundaries of the neighbourhood, lie two distinct neighbourhoods with different problems and different needs. These differences became clear when the process of problem-defining begins in earnest. It became clear at the first public meeting that the problems selected by residents in each section of Neighbourhood B were specific to their local needs. For example those in Gamma Town identified anti-social behaviour around their local shops as being the most significant problems, while those in Omega Town felt that issues relating to traffic, such as speeding and parking were more of a problem. By virtue of this divide in how local priorities arose, the police are somewhat hamstrung by the aspirations of neighbourhood policing to provide a local service to local neighbourhoods. At some stage on the road to providing a bespoke policing service at a neighbourhood level, there comes a point where the police have to say, 'that is too small an area to be practically considered a neighbourhood'. Thus, due to the practicalities of police

resourcing issues, Omega Town and Gamma Town are merged into one neighbourhood, when they could easily be considered to be two distinct neighbourhoods in their own right. This is a good example of a situation where the police have to work with what they are given. They are not 'making-up' neighbourhoods, but working with what they find on the ground, difficult as that may be.

The discussions that follow in this chapter are based on the process of rolling out the problem-solving process and establishing the NAG in the neighbourhood. This is the early phase of the development of problem solving in any neighbourhood. In contrast to Neighbourhood A, which was one of two pilot neighbourhoods for the establishment of NAGs, when this research was conducted, the NAG was not yet established. Thus, problems had not yet been defined and the tools of problem-solving were only being taken from the metaphorical toolbox during the research period. The focus of the research in Neighbourhood B is therefore on the earlier part of the process of developing a NAG and a problem-solving agenda. Whereas the research on Neighbourhood A is on the work of an older, more established NAG and how it works towards problem-solving.

The process of problem-defining in Neighbourhood B

One advantage of studying Neighbourhood B was that neighbourhood policing had not yet been rolled out when the research began, unlike in Neighbourhood A which had been a pilot neighbourhood for the force and had an established NAG when the research started. Thus the two neighbourhoods are at different stages in their development of the problem-solving process.

1. First Public Meeting

The first formal engagement with the 'community' in Neighbourhood B took place with a public meeting in the school in Omega Town, the older part of the neighbourhood. The meeting was widely advertised by the TVP, over 500 flyers had been delivered to houses in the area and a local radio station mentioned the event throughout the day. Despite this effort on the part of the organizers, the public turnout for the event was poor. When the panel, police officers and PCSOs, organizers and observers were factored out, there were nine local residents in attendance, including only one person of a visible ethnic minority. Residents were outnumbered by organizers as there were 4 PCs, 2 PCSOs, a councillor, a representative of the community safety partnership, a council officer and two observers. When I spoke to the organizers at the event, they said they felt a sense of disappointment that such a small group of people had shown up. There was also a sense of resignation as they had, they felt, done all they could to try to drum up attendance at the meeting.

As people arrived at the venue, they were given some small circular stickers to place on a map of Neighbourhood B to indicate where they saw the problems appearing in their area. This map was later to be used by the NAG as a point of reference and also in the facilitation process that took place later in the public meeting itself.

The meeting began with an introduction from the neighbourhood inspector who described what neighbourhood policing was and what it was supposed to do. 'We are not here to provide each community with a "Dixon of Dock Green"' he said. This was followed by a set of short talks from representatives of the local community safety partnership, an officer from the council and a councillor. Each explained their roles and their commitment to the process. The local ward councillor (one of three for the area) began by saying that she did not understand the process of neighbourhood policing or problem solving. She then went on to state that solving these problems was a long road and that everyone had to work together to do it. She finished by pointing out that 'the police cannot be everywhere at all times'.

After the panelists had spoken, a facilitator from TVP Headquarters began a group session on what problems affect the quality of life of residents in Neighbourhood B. The first part of this session was a form of brainstorming whereby residents called out the issues that caused them concern. With the assistance of the facilitator, they began with a broad brush description of what their problem was or is and then worked down to a more detailed description of what it is, where it is, and when it is. The facilitator worked on large white sheets which could be removed from the board and hung on the walls of the room at the end of the brainstorming session. Then residents would be given three stickers to prioritise their problems, in a form of voting. According to the slides from the presentation given by the representative of the community safety partnership, a red sticker would mean 'Top priority – 3 points', an orange sticker means '2nd priority – 2 points' and a green sticker means '3rd priority – 1 point'. The problems which accrued the most points were to develop into the priority problems for the nascent NAG to deal with. As a result of the

brainstorming process, three issues that were raised as the main problems by those in attendance were: parking, vandalism and 'anti-social behaviour and young people hanging around'.

Parking

The first issue raised was that of parking. The man who raised it was deeply concerned with the problem of parking in the area. I met him as I was coming to the meeting and had stopped to ask him directions to the venue. We struck up a conversation about the meeting and what he hoped to gain from it as we walked to the venue. It was clear that his only concern was with parking in the area and that he felt nothing was being done about it despite his opinion that this was a serious problem and a great impingement on his quality of life. Upon arrival he took as many circular stickers that corresponded with parking problems and stuck them all over the map of the area where he thought there were parking problems. During the brainstorming, he raised the problem of parking. When asked to be more specific, he said 'on double yellow lines and on corners. When further asked where it was a problem, he said 'the whole of Omega Town', but refused to give any specific locations. He appeared disappointed when other residents did not weigh in with him and describe their problems with parking. In the final count of priorities, he stuck all three of his stickers beside the problem of parking, and paid no attention to any other problems raised at the meeting. In a small meeting such as this, the determined attention of one concerned citizen may have the effect of skewing a vote for priorities. (His six points are over 10% of the total points available at a poorly attended meeting.) It was apparent that manipulating the outcome of the process to favour his pet problem was what he hoped to achieve from the meeting.

Vandalism

After the question of parking had been addressed, the next problem was vandalism. Residents said that thousands of pounds of damage was done in the area. In one particular block of flats lights were smashed, ceilings were damaged, wiring was pulled out of buildings, walls were soiled with urine and windows inside and outside the block were broken. In contrast to the problem of parking, the residents were able to give details of the exact location of where this had happened. When questioned by the police facilitator, they were able to say that the damage is generally caused at about 2000-2230 on Fridays, but is also bad on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays as well.

Similarly, other areas in Omega Town were singled out as suffering from vandalism. The sports club suffered damage to outdoor furniture after dark and at weekends. The main street also suffered from vandalism at similar times. People leaving one of the public houses in Omega Town and walking out of town were reported to be scratching cars and bouncing on the bonnets of the cars. Finally, a piece of parkland near the town was described as the site of vandalism, fires and damage to property, although no specific time could be given.

Anti-Social Behaviour and Young People Hanging Around

The next issue that was raised by the participants at the public meeting concerned the interrelated problems of anti-social behaviour and 'young people hanging around'. Anti-social behaviour was described as including teenagers damaging cars, and 'name calling' as well as the use of mini-motos and mopeds, which residents felt were frightening for children. No times or specific locations were given to describe these activities and to a large extent the concept of anti-social behaviour appeared to encompass problems

associated with young people in general rather than any specific instances of problems, problem locations or problem people.

The problem of young people hanging around was a concern to some of the participants. Young people hang around outside shops and in the parkland, drinking alcohol. However, one resident did point out that she felt somewhat conflicted when she was intimidated by the young people, as they were in fact doing nothing wrong and there was nothing for them to do. Their actual behaviour was not meant to intimidate people who were passing or also using the public spaces. For this problem, residents were able to give specific locations and times which the young people congregated.

Speeding and Abandoned Cars

The next two problems defined by residents were both related to the (mis)use of cars in the neighbourhood. Speeding was identified as a problem. Three streets in particular were mentioned. Residents also mentioned cars being abandoned on the parkland and speculated that they may be there as a result of joy-riding.

Police Feedback

An interesting issue that was raised as a problem by the residents at the meeting related to the lack of response complainants received from the police when they made a complaint. After giving information to the police some residents felt forgotten when they never found out if the perpetrator had been caught, convicted, cautioned, charged or ignored. This problem is unique among the set of problems defined by those in attendance in that it is a problem with police service provision rather than a problem with crime, anti-social

behaviour or quality of life issues, which are normally the remit of the problem-solving process.

When the brainstorming component of the evening was completed, the residents in attendance were allowed vote by placing stickers against the problems listed. The organizers were not entitled to a vote, or as the facilitator lightheartedly put it, 'nobody on the dark side gets a vote'. The result of the vote was:

1. Vandalism;
2. Anti-social behaviour - particularly teenagers and young people; and
3. Police feedback.

The NAG process had been explained to the gathering by the representative of the community safety partnership and it was announced that they hoped to get the NAG up and running within a month. This would begin with a pre-NAG meeting to introduce interested parties to the process and then be followed up with a full formal NAG meeting soon thereafter.

The public meeting had decided its priority issues, but as the representative of the community safety partnership had pointed out in her talk, prioritizing one set of issues does not mean ignoring other issues and so the target problems to be set for the NAG would not come solely from this public consultation meeting. A questionnaire had been sent to other stakeholders such as local businesses and other organizations, whose views were also to be taken into consideration. The vote at the public meeting was not in itself a final determination of what problems the public wanted solved.

Before the meeting drew to a close one resident had a question for the police. 'Do the police actually know how to solve vandalism, or is this just simply a brainstorming exercise?' To which the facilitator responded that the answer was 'both'. There are, he said, things that can be done, particularly in working with partners to reduce vandalism. Anti-social behaviour on the other hand can be more of a seasonal issue and can have different responses at different times of year. The answer was vague, and did not give specific examples of what can or should be done to combat vandalism. This may have been to prevent committing the police to taking actions which may not be warranted by the actual situation in Neighbourhood B, or simply because the officer felt that there was a certain inevitability to many of the problems and a certain futility to many of the responses.

2. The Pre-NAG Meeting in Neighbourhood B

At the end of the public meeting in Omega Town in Neighbourhood B, the date was set for the next phase, the pre-NAG meeting. This meeting is for people who may be interested in joining the NAG to come along and see what is involved and decide if they wish to become a member. The meeting was to be held 10 days later, again in Omega Town, at a local Christian centre. The meeting was to outline the purpose of the NAG and to describe how the problem-solving process itself was supposed to work.

The meeting began with a presentation on problem-solving delivered by the Safer Neighbourhood Project Manager from the local community safety partnership. This presentation used the standard problem-solving approaches (discussed above, Chapter 2)

of Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment (SARA) and the Problem Analysis Triangle (PAT).

The meeting did not engage with the question of how to solve the problems particular to Neighbourhood B, but worked more on setting out the process. In essence, the presentation was more procedural than substantive. Each problem according to the logic of the PAT needs a location, an offender and a victim. According to materials on the PAT provided to the pre-NAG meeting; 'If one or more of these elements do not occur, then a crime cannot be committed.' This is a contentious proposition as there are numerous victimless crimes such as recreational drug use which would only require the latter two corners of the triangle for an offence to be committed. However, this simple analysis of victimhood has been criticised and there is some debate as to the extent to which such crimes can be considered 'victimless' (Hoyle and Zedner, 2007). Although the literature is wide and detailed, it is perhaps only necessary to outline some of the ideas briefly here and explain why the notion of the 'victimless' crime is not entirely relevant in this context. In the case of the problems defined within the framework of neighbourhood policing, the notion of victimhood has been broadly conceived. The definitional looseness of concepts such as community, neighbourhood, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, makes it possible for virtually anybody to consider themselves a victim of many of the problems described in a neighbourhood. The victimization associated with littering, vandalism, graffiti and dog-mess is spread across all users of any area (including the perpetrator). Thus, if one takes a broad conception of who the victim is, there are few crimes that can be considered victimless, and those that are will probably be unlikely to be reported to the police or raised at a NAG.

When one of the corners of the triangle is removed, the problem should evaporate or change substantially. During the presentation, the three corners were provided with a word associated with the type of intervention that could work to help eliminate that corner. *Diversion* might remove offenders, *protection* may prevent a location being used and *support* could help victims or potential victims to avoid future victimization. Each of these concepts resonates with a tricky body of criminological debate. The concept of diversion of potential offenders (especially young people) brings into light the debates around early intervention and the problems of socialization of young people in society generally and the question of how youths, for example, can be diverted from criminal or anti-social behaviour has been debated substantially (Muncie, 1999 [2002]). The other two approaches to removing a corner of the triangle invoke concepts of responsabilization (discussed above, Chapter 1) with its implicit admission that the state has failed to provide the security that it has promised. Thus it is up to the individual (or corporate body, including agents of the state such as local councils) to eliminate the corners of the PAT which they have control over. They should do this by being less likely to become a victim (albeit doing so perhaps with the support of the state through the NAG) or by protecting the location from being used for committing crimes or partaking in anti-social behaviour. The protection of the location invokes an attempt at ‘target-hardening’ (Hughes, 2006b: 18) and other forms of ‘situational crime prevention’ (Clarke, 1980). One could take each response to each corner of the PAT and interrogate its evidential base in great detail. However for the practical purposes of the NAG, no such interrogation takes place. The PAT is used as a conceptual device for analysing problems and attempting to draw out the constituent parts of a given problem.

The second technique used is the SARA technique. The four parts of the technique were outlined to the attendees. The *scanning* process includes environmental visual audits (EVAs), which the TVP had already begun to carry out. It also includes gathering other evidence of problems, such as reports to police about occurrences of the problem or residents' keeping a log of such occurrences to provide a more evidence based description of the problem with which to work. Each NAG is given its own digital camera for use on EVAs and gathering other evidence about the existence of problems. The *analysis* component means that the NAG needs to gather evidence in order to respond to problems. The *responses* that the NAG then decides upon will then be based on what can be elicited from a 'Board Blast'. This is a form of facilitated brainstorming session that will provide a set of options for action, which can then be applied once the NAG has evaluated their options and chosen the most appropriate response for the problem and for their neighbourhood. The NAG needs to record the response it implements before it carries out the final part of the project, *assessment*. The final phase is a form of evaluation of the process. The materials provided with the presentation describe it thus: 'The assessment is a crucial part of the process and may be used for future profiles on this problem or other similar problems. The method of measuring success should have been considered and recorded at the response ... stage.'

It is important to see the internal checks and procedures contained within the SARA system as proposed here. The two major procedural steps are; (a) evidence must be gathered to establish that there is a problem, and (b) the description of what is a successful outcome, or at least how to evaluate an outcome, must be decided when the NAG is deciding the response. These two steps may not sound like much, but they are the essential backbone of the SARA process. Both provide a mechanism to guard against subjective

perception clouding the problem-solving process and hindering any progress. If you allow a problem to be defined without evidence, you run the risk of at best wasting police and agency resources, and at worst targetting groups who are not causing any problems at all, solely because somebody has decided that they perceive a problem. In the assessment stage, there is also the possibility that if the NAG does not decide beforehand what is a successful outcome, but merely looks back on the state of the problem at some point in the future, there is the risk of either feeling that no progress has been made or of looking at it again with rose-tinted glasses. Realistic targets and measurable outcomes are thus a useful way to prevent people saying at the end of the process that no progress has been made or that the NAG has done nothing. However, there is also the risk with such an approach that only quantitative evidence such as crime reported to the police will be considered the benchmark. Although there is no obligation on the NAG to use such measures and it is free to use any measure it wishes to evaluate its progress.

The presenter was unambiguous in pointing out that the NAG has to be clear about what success is. Can a reduction in the impact of the problem suffice, or perhaps a re-alignment of the perception of the problem on behalf of those who are concerned about it? Few problems can be entirely eradicated. The question of evaluation is one that must be decided carefully and realistically before the response is initiated. 'There will not', the presenter pointed out, 'always be quick wins. Some issues are much more complex and long term.'

The next issue for the pre-NAG meeting was the question of forming a constitution for the NAG. There is a model constitution provided, but each NAG is entitled to formulate its own version of the constitution to suit its own needs which may be peculiar to a particular neighbourhood or member. The constitution is signed by each member who agrees to abide

by its principles. It is put in place to try to prevent people coming along to a NAG meeting with their own agenda and to try to increase the accountability of the members for the actions of the NAG. The constitution did not have to be agreed at the pre-NAG meeting but it was felt that it was important to flag up the existence of the constitution to potential NAG members, who would be expected to abide by the conditions within the constitution.

When running a meeting which is meant to give a flavour of the work of the NAG to potential members, it is important to discuss what is the ideal composition of the group. The issue of representativeness immediately arose. As the representative of the community safety partnership said, 'we need a good representative sample of [Neighbourhood B]. If there were 30 people trying to get on the NAG and 6 were from a particular street, we would need to say no due to representativeness'. However, no mention was made of maximum size of the NAG or the maximum number of residents at the NAG. An attendee of the NAG said that the local Muslim community were very upset by dog-mess in the area, however nobody from the Muslim community was represented at the pre-NAG meeting. Indeed there were no attendees at any of the NAG meetings observed. The question of minority representativeness will be discussed further later on, because the NAG in Neighbourhood B had a problem engaging with the Muslim community. However, at the pre-NAG meeting, the question of representativeness was considered a risk in terms of over-representation of certain groups rather than under-representation.

The meeting finished with a discussion of what was the best time and location to hold the first NAG. This mundane administrative question is in fact of more significance than it appears at first. The simple choice of evening versus daytime automatically precludes and includes a set group of people. Often, evenings better suit residents, while daytimes can

suit agency staff. However neither of these proved to be hard and fast rules. Some NAGs meet a week before local parish or town council meetings in order to try to effectively feed into the council meetings. Some NAGs meet during the daytime one month and in the evening the next. Others simply meet at the same time each month. The time is up to the NAG itself. The NAG decided on a Monday at 1pm but did not agree that it would continue to be the same time each month. This was later to cause some headaches as agency staff find it easier to block off meetings in their diaries months in advance and subsequent NAG meetings at Neighbourhood B all ended with the difficult question of rescheduling for next month, and the inevitable loss of somebody present, who was unable to attend. When it came to choosing the location, things were a little easier although not without their complexities. There are two distinct parts of Neighbourhood B; Omega Town, where the public meeting and pre-NAG were held; and Gamma Town which had not yet held a meeting related to the NAG process. The next meeting was to be held in Gamma Town, with the venue to rotate on a monthly basis, depending on availability. A useful settlement for trying to bring both areas into the fold, if somewhat confusing and inconsistent for NAG members. The meeting's time was later confused somewhat, when, in an attempt to 'connect with young people', a further consideration was to try to factor in the availability of a GCSE student who was keen to attend the NAG meetings. This raises some questions about how 'inclusive' a NAG can be. In order to be inclusive and consider the input of as many potential stakeholders as possible, there is something of a fine balancing act required to gain maximum attendance. However, when it comes to scheduling, it seems likely that in many NAGs, as in Neighbourhood B, it may be impossible to please all of the people all of the time.

Defining Anti-Social Behaviour in Neighbourhood B

Throughout the development of the NAG and the problem solving process in Neighbourhood B, attendances at NAGs have been relatively poor. Although Neighbourhood A has a longer established NAG, and indeed the two neighbourhoods were chosen to some extent because of their differences, the NAG at Neighbourhood B has had trouble sustaining interest among stakeholders.

The December 2007 NAG was particularly poorly attended. Nine people showed up including myself (a non-participating observer), the facilitator from the Community Safety Partnership and a minute taker. Of the six remaining attendees, three were from the TVP, one was the local neighbourhood police officer, one was a trainee PCSO and the third was the most senior, an officer who had served several years with the force and who needed to gain neighbourhood policing experience in order to make the next step in his career. Both of the latter two officers were coming to the NAG to 'see it in action'. The remaining three attendees were stakeholders from only one side of the neighbourhood (Omega Town). Gamma Town was not represented.

What is clear from this example is that at this particular NAG meeting, one third of the attendees (this researcher and two police officers) were attending for the purposes of academic interest or vocational training and not because they had a stake in the neighbourhood or could contribute to the NAG's work. It is easy to be critical of a low attendance. However it is not the low attendance that is being discussed here, but the discussions of the meeting itself on the question of anti-social behaviour. It was, after all, two weeks before Christmas and attendances were generally reduced for evening meetings at this NAG. What is interesting is what happened at this meeting, one third of which was

composed of police staff. Only one of whom was posted to the neighbourhood. For the purposes of this discussion the three officers will be called the 'senior officer', the 'junior officer' and the 'PCSO' and it is the junior officer who is posted to Neighbourhood B.

The meeting began with a brief discussion of the problems of moving forward the drive for a community clean up in Gamma Town which the council found to be generally tidy and the TVP were pleased with as there were no apparent 'crime-sprees'. Although the senior officer who pointed this out did mention that he felt the 'kids' in Gamma Town 'need smartening up'. Despite his lack of connection to the particular neighbourhood and his role as an observer in the NAG process, it became very clear early on in the meeting that the senior officer felt comfortable using the meeting as a forum within which he could be full and frank about his opinions of crime and policing. This is an interesting turn of events as throughout the police literature and training on the NAG process, it is clearly stated that the NAG is not a 'talking shop'. There is a real wariness of letting residents or concerned groups take over the NAG and use it to highlight their issues or simply to vent. The NAG is not a public meeting, but one in which members must 'buy-in' by signing the constitution and abide by the rules. In this case however, the senior officer, perhaps bolstered by the fact that the TVP accounted for one third of the meeting and he was the most senior TVP representative (although not a particularly senior police officer by rank), felt free to use the meeting in exactly such a fashion.

The question of anti-social behaviour quickly arose in the meeting as it is one of the priority problems that had been decided on for the NAG in Neighbourhood B to work on. The junior officer was very quick to ask what was meant by anti-social behaviour and the senior officer began a discussion of the differences between crime and anti-social

behaviour. These differences made it difficult to use statistics to measure police effectiveness. The description of these differences which the police officer undertook was particularly trite and anyone remotely familiar with anti-social behaviour and the problems associated with it would understand these issues. This caused the facilitator from the Community Safety Partnership some understandable distress as the meeting began to get bogged down and there was a clash between the two on how relevant this discussion was.

The facilitator was keen to move the discussion forward from an abstract discussion of anti-social behaviour to apply it practically to Neighbourhood B. This, she argued, was best done by defining anti-social behaviour and then gathering evidence of where it occurs in the neighbourhood. From there locations that suffer badly from anti-social behaviour can be found and the particular problems at that location can be solved. What was needed was a basic definition of anti-social behaviour as it works within Neighbourhood B.

The junior officer was not particularly happy with this idea. 'If we define anti-social behaviour now, others will arrive along later and change it'. The problem could not be worked upon unless it was agreed what the problem was. This is a relatively insightful observation for, as discussed in chapter 2, the definition of anti-social behaviour is exceptionally broad. This broadness was quickly exposed by the spontaneous announcement on the part of the senior officer that all drinking in the street is always anti-social behaviour. This was because of the loudness, the mess and the drunken behaviour.

This broad, non-sequitur of an interjection caused some controversy and the facilitator, approaching the question diplomatically, pointed out that as there was a stronger link between drinking and anti-social behaviour at this NAG than at other NAGs. The senior

officer immediately announced that the problem was not the fault of the pubs but the fault of 'outside drinking'. This ambiguous statement appeared to mean that it was the existence of outdoor drinking in the country at all, rather than any specific instance of it that was the problem. The senior officer's insistence on the issue was clearly noticable in the meeting. The field notes collected at the meeting contain a comment that reads; 'more than any other NAG, this is being dominated by [the senior officer] and his personal ideas of what is and is not proper order. He has very conservative ideas about what is going on and is a hater of outside drinking'.

The discussion moved on when the junior officer asked if the NAG was trying to define anti-social behaviour generally and wanted to know if there was any central definition published anywhere. The facilitator worked with the group to define anti-social behaviour as the NAG sees it. After some discussion, the definition that the NAG came to was; 'Any behaviour causing intimidation, fear or alarm to another person' which is different to, but equally as nebulous as the legal definition of anti-social behaviour in the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*: 'Acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as (the defendant).' Both definitions bring within the ambit of 'unacceptable' or reprehensible activity a broad spectrum of human activity.

It is interesting that this exercise ever had to take place at all. There is little to be gained from re-defining a broad open-ended category such as anti-social behaviour under the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*. What it does illustrate is that in choosing the problems a NAG decides to focus on, it is free to re-define a problem beyond that which is set down by central government. As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, neighbourhood policing exists

within a broad, subjective framework which is short on tight definitions. This discussion of anti-social behaviour illustrates the confusion that such broad definitions cause for those actually working 'on the ground', or 'at the coalface' in navigating conceptual terrain that is inherently subjective. The efforts of this NAG meeting to re-define anti-social behaviour was borne out of a collective confusion about what it is. Their work on re-defining it perhaps left them no closer to understanding what exactly the problem they are trying to solve is; or indeed what it should be. The junior officer in the meeting was clearly disappointed that this was the best definition of anti-social behaviour that could be arrived at because it was simply so broad.

The definition of the problem is a crux in the problem-solving process and this example emphasizes that. Before any effort can be made to solve the problem, the NAG cannot even agree what it is. However what it also illustrates is that after the consultation process, what is being worked on as a problem specified by the 'community' can be altered by those on the NAG to include or omit certain types of behaviour or problems which those who were consulted thought they were asking to be fixed.

Dealing With or 'Problem-Solving' Anti-Social Behaviour

General Brain-storming

The initial evidence gathering process began with a brain-storming approach to the question of anti-social behaviour in the area. This involved using a large white-paper board upon which was drawn a triangle which formed the basis for the PAT. While the pre-NAG meeting had been about explaining to prospective members what the PAT was to be all about, this meeting was about actually applying the PAT to Neighbourhood B. The initial brainstorming, being a broad brush use of the PAT to establish a set of potential categories

of person, place or thing that could be said to have a place at a corner of the triangle. Each of the sides of the triangle were discussed by the NAG who came up with the following possibilities:

<u>Offender (Villain[sic])</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Victims</u>
Not just young people	Shops	Residents
Adults under the influence of alcohol or drugs	Green areas	Elderly
Shops/off licenses/pubs	School gates (not much ASB)	Young people (are afraid of other young people)
Visitors to the area	School generally perceived as difficult	Shopkeepers
Parents	<i>Cycle paths</i>	Visitors
(Facilitator asked 'should schools be here?')	Underpasses	Police
Residents/tenants/landlords	<i>Cul-de-sacs & car parks</i>	Businesses
Government	Alleyways	Schools (Staff and Students)
	Play areas	<i>Council</i>
	Communal areas in flats	<i>Local Town Council</i>
	Allotments	Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations)
	Cemetery	Public transport users
	Church	Uniformed services
	Pubs	Community spirit
		Ethnic Minorities
		Tax payers

Fig. 4.1: The Problem Analysis Triangle in Neighbourhood B (Those in italics have been changed to protect the specific names of locations)

It is interesting to note that the police were mentioned and the facilitator found this an unusual victim to be raised in the brain-storming part of the problem-solving process. Similarly, the NAG was unusual in that it was the first the facilitator had seen that raised public transport users as victims.

What is also worth noting is that at the beginning of the process, the exercise is almost one in broadening the groups' mind to thinking about the possible parameters of the problem, rather than specifically working towards defining targeted goals. Aside from the facilitator and perhaps one or two of the police or partners who have been to NAGs in other neighbourhoods, most members of the NAG had no idea about the problem-solving process and were in a sense being led by the hand through the brainstorming. The impact and influence of the facilitator cannot be underestimated. With a few leading questions, or hints, problems that would not be brought to the fore can be elicited, or suggested problems can be 're-categorised' or shrugged off as 'well that's part of anti-social behaviour' or 'that falls under parking'. However, it is clear from the efforts that the community safety partnership and the TVP have made to increase training among NAG members, and particularly NAG chairs, that it is hoped that NAG members would be more aware of what they were doing, as well as having some basic understanding of why it is supposed to work. In the meeting described, however, members did not seem to be so well informed about how the process worked.

Although there was not much 'leading' going on here, if part of the process is broadening the conception of perpetrator or victim to include, for example, the police or the tax-payer, then it may have a form of educational purpose. On the other hand it could also distort the aim of the brain-storming process in bringing out specific examples. However, as can be seen from the example above, most of these suggestions could be applied to almost any local area where residents are concerned about 'bad things'. Only those in italics have been altered to protect the specific names of locations within Neighbourhood B.

Gathering Evidence

Once the general brain-storming has been completed, the group moved on to trying to gather evidence specific to Neighbourhood B. A representative from the council's housing department (although not the housing authority responsible for the flats in Gamma Town where a lot of the anti-social behaviour was alleged to have occurred) suggested that their records on damage could be used, if it was 'sanitized' to protect individual identities. The representative pointed out that the data was not so good over short periods as most anti-social behaviour is in the summer and so she suggested that it might be better to look back over one year's worth of records. There was another problem with the statistics because they were being prepared for the housing department's anti-social behaviour group and being handed over to the police. This meant that there was a risk of double counting some incidences of anti-social behaviour. However, with the redaction of certain information to protect anonymity, there was little that could be done.

This 'double accounting' problem raises an interesting question about the difficulties of making a proportionate response to criminal (or anti-social) behaviour. In essence, if you report the damage done to your block to both the police and the housing department of the council, your crime becomes logged twice. Whereas, if you are too busy, or disaffected with the prospect of a useful outcome from either the police or council and report it to neither, your equally serious damage will not be counted at all. Your block or street will get no 'purple splodges' on it if you don't turn up to public consultation meetings. In essence, this information sharing process runs the risk of

making problems look bigger where the victim or concerned resident has the skills, time and interest to shout louder. If resource allocation is decided, based on double accounted statistics, the resulting scenario is one where the police are not fighting crime or anti-social behaviour because it is something bad which effects us all evenly, but are working to keep a few people, those who complain the most, happy.

As well as housing data, other forms of data that were suggested were data collected by the local Neighbourhood Watch group, although the NAG did not appear to know much about this; school records, which were dismissed as being 'quite personal and subjective' (rather than on the grounds that to use them would be hugely invasive of the child's privacy); and residents of the area were encouraged to keep a record of any instances of anti-social behaviour that they came across. EVAs were also raised as a possible way to evaluate what needed to be done and describe the scope of the problem. EVAs involve a NAG member (or possibly two) making their way around the neighbourhood and taking photographs of instances of disorder, noting their location down and describing the type and extent of the damage. Over the following few months, the EVAs were conducted, though it was something of a stop-start process. Some were delayed because of bad weather, others were postponed because people were too busy. However, after a few months EVAs were produced that gave a taste of the damage that had been done in Neighbourhood B. On the basis of the EVAs, it was agreed that Omega Town was the area that needed the most attention.

Who, What, Where, Why and How

After the discussion of evidence, there was a truncated discussion of anti-social behaviour, specifically in Neighbourhood B. This was to take the approach of asking

‘WWWWH?’ or ‘Who, What, When, Why and How?’ The theory behind this technique is, as I understand it, that by listing things out under each of these headings, a better approach to gathering evidence as to the extent of the problem can be devised. Thus, if ‘when’ is answered ‘in the summer, between 1800 and 2200’, then there is little point trying to record details of the prevalence of the activity during an autumn morning. Similarly, when it comes to developing a suitable response, the NAG can rule out increasing PCSO patrols during the early afternoon. This sort of information gathering by the NAG is crucial to an effective application of any problem-solving approach, and it also may have the added ‘advantage’ of feeding information to the police and other agencies.

The discussion was cut short because the NAG meetings are only supposed to run for an hour and a half, so the discussion only got as far as ‘What’. However these were indicative of the problems that those at the NAG considered to be the anti-social behaviour. The discussion began by asking ‘who?’ which was instantly answered as ‘young people’. something of a long list of ‘what’ then arose. They can be grouped into a few categories.

Recreational activities, such as ball games and skateboarding. Youths were playing inappropriate ball games and some of the youths ‘should have been somewhere else’. Skateboarding was mentioned because NAG members wanted to know if skateboarding could ever be appropriate. However, when the facilitator probed a little further about where it was a problem it was found that skateboarding was not in fact a problem and was crossed from the list. Mini-motos were mentioned briefly as was the perennial problem of ‘hanging around’. It was pointed out that hanging around is not

anti-social behaviour per se. Indeed, it is possibly the most social few hours in the week for the young people involved in it. Somebody pointed out that it wasn't the hanging around that was the problem, people in Neighbourhood B had a problem with swearing.

Recreational drug use, including the consumption of alcohol by the young people. Drug use, it was claimed, lead to thefts and underage sex. There were parties. Condoms and needles could be found around the neighbourhood. Although it was admitted that this did not happen much. There was some fighting taking place and it was alleged that at times this involved weapons.

Criminal activities were alleged to be taking place alongside the aforementioned recreational activities. Vandalism and graffiti were mentioned, although only in the context of their being used as trace evidence of anti-social behaviour. In this particular exercise, it is not actual criminal activity that is being sought, but evidence of anti-social behaviour, which may be found in the damage left from crime, which presumably occurred because of some non-criminal yet anti-social behaviour. There was also the problem of intimidation. Some people who were reporting criminal activity or anti-social behaviour were being threatened. This, it was suggested, might mean that if the NAG was successful at dealing with the problem of intimidation, there might be an increased number of reports to the police. An apparent statistical increase in crime could in fact be a measure of success.

After discussing the various types of 'what' there was a brief discussion of 'who'. Although it had been agreed that it was young people, the facilitator was keen to find

out more about them. When asked 'what ages are the young people?' the answer was '11-24', which was then tightened down to 15-18 year olds. The majority were males, although there were some females and the majority were white. However, the NAG appeared to be very wary about discussing questions of the race of perpetrators. Only one member of the NAG was pushing the question of race. He was a local resident, but according to the field notes, 'he is also cagey'. He appeared to have an underlying point to make, but was afraid of coming out and saying it, because of the reluctance of the group to discuss issues of race.

Despite all the efforts to blame young people for all the anti-social behaviour in the area, another view of young people was propounded by an attendee at a NAG meeting some months later. This alternate view is perhaps another example of one individual driving a personal position on the question of anti-social behaviour. It arose at the NAG in Neighbourhood B the month after the incident above with the police officer who had his own agenda on outdoor drinking. This NAG was again held in Omega Town, this time in the police station, and was much better attended than the NAG the previous month. This example is in almost direct contrast to the experience at the NAG meeting before Christmas where the police officer took the chance to give out about the problems of anti-social behaviour as he saw them. In this case, an attendee at the NAG spoke up for the young people who were supposed to be the cause of the anti-social behaviour in the area.

The attendee, who seemed to be relatively new to the NAG announced a number of times, with great enthusiasm, that the young people of Neighbourhood B were an exceptional group of people and were not to be made scapegoats for all the anti-social

behaviour in the area. Children, according to this attendee, are positive and pleasant to deal with. 'So what if they congregate in some places. They have to congregate somewhere and we all had to do it.' This is a relatively unusual position to hear advocated at a NAG, which is an organization that has tended to attract those who are concerned about law and order and in some way 'dealing with it', whether they are the police or other community stakeholders. Indeed, virtually no attendees at NAGs would qualify as 'young people' or 'youths' themselves, and so it is quite straightforward for the discourse of a NAG to become one that 'others' 'youths' and 'young people'. The defence of young people mentioned here was unusual at the NAGs observed, although it does resonate with some of the comments at the original public meeting in Omega Town where one resident mentioned 'kids hanging around' as a problem, while in the next breath admitting that 'they're not actually doing anything wrong'.

This lone voice at the NAG about the lack of malice among the children of the area was somewhat sidetracked as the group began to work on problem-solving anti-social behaviour in a fashion that focussed almost exclusively on the anti-social behaviour of young people. The NAG then began the process of discussing what approaches to dealing with young people had been tried before. One participant pointed out that anti-social behaviour is worse in good weather and the summer, 'we could pray for rain all year round' he suggested. Aside from prayers, a wide variety of responses had previously been used in the neighbourhood, some of which would be repeated. These included family activities at the recreational centre, a 'community mobilizer' at the recreation centre, a drama and dance summer school that was free to attend and universally considered a success, a street football initiative that brought the children

to another part of the city, and an intervention by some consultants to specifically work with younger people to handle racial issues (there is a significant Muslim community in Neighbourhood B and there were concerns about tensions among the different youth populations). The final response, the intervention of consultants received a mixed response and has since ended. For their part, the police said there was some CCTV in the square, their officers conducted weekly off-license checks, they had a dedicated schools officer, and PCSOs patrolled the schools. This amounted to almost two pages of 'responses' on a whiteboard and the facilitator said she had never had such an amount of responses at previous NAGs.

From these discussions, it was felt that certain consistent themes emerged. Young people needed to be engaged. The NAG felt it needed 'to find out what young people want' and 'to do a selling job to a lot of older people to build their confidence in what is happening'. It was suggested that one way to get a so-called 'quick win' was to provide bins at one recreational ground where there had been some progress with reducing the amount of broken glass. This search for quick wins was constantly reiterated at both the NAGs in Neighbourhoods A and B. There was a sense that some of the big problems that they were struggling against were unlikely to be solved quickly or easily and in the mean time, to keep up the appearances of progress, small intermediate yet tangible goals needed to be sought and delivered on.

Yet this still leaves the NAG in a position where it is trying to reduce the amount of anti-social behaviour conducted by young people. The discussion that ensued involved issues and perspectives at the heart of the academic debate on policing. The first example of this is the question of the role of the patrolling police officer. As

discussed above (chapter 1) there is an almost insatiable demand for police officers to be patrolling, yet this is only one component of a varied job, and this lack of understanding of the job of a police officer was evident in one resident's question to the police. If youth are the problem, the resident asked, 'what is the point of PCSOs patrolling on a Sunday morning?' To which the police officer replied, somewhat annoyed, that there were many jobs an officer has to do other than patrolling. Police officers, and certainly many of the front line officers that were encountered during the research found all the divergent demands on their time frustrating, and this seemed to be receiving vent in the response provided here. Yet, in a sense the answer was not one that entirely addressed the question. The question did not demand that the police spend all their time patrolling, but just that the patrolling be targetted to specific needs that were set out, either by the community, or by intelligence led use of patrols where they are most appropriate. The misunderstanding however, appeared to demonstrate the pressure that officers, (or it appeared, at least this officer) felt that they are under with this constant demand for ever more patrol. At the end of the discussion, the actions from the meeting included a commitment to plan patrols by PCSOs to include the recreational ground and the square at around 10pm.

The second main action from this meeting was the agreement that the NAG needed to engage with youths or consult with schools about youth behaviour. The NAG had no representation from schools or young people (and lack of representation from numerous partners was a problem for the NAG throughout the period of study, as discussed in the next section). Yet this provided the NAG with a difficult and controversial question, 'how do we reach difficult kids?' On this analysis, those young people that turn up to represent 'youth' are interested and committed, and thus

unrepresentative of the young people who are seen to be causing all the trouble. The answer provided by one of the attendees was a paradigm example of a piece of responsabilization discourse (see chapter 1 above), 'The answer needs to be saying to young people "you want it, you do it."' This is of course something of a poor answer to a question which hinges around the problem that those who are 'hanging around' are doing so because they want to. The activities the NAG appears to want them to do such as going to bed early or spending evenings in organized youth clubs is exactly what they do not want to do. This argument on dealing with young people by 'responsibilizing' them seems almost immediately doomed to failure. It seems hard to credibly sustain the argument that it is up to young people to sort out the problem of 'young people hanging around'. The problem of how we socialize our young people, and particularly our young males may be a problem too far for a NAG to completely eliminate, using responsabilization, PATs, SARA or otherwise. To do so runs the great risks of partnership work on community safety, criminalizing 'youth' and framing policies for working with young people as criminal justice policies rather than being motivated by other aims in social policy (this is discussed further in chapter 6).

Involvement

The final area that needs to be discussed about the initial process of establishing a NAG, which was clearly illustrated by the experience of the NAG in Neighbourhood B is involvement. Initiating and sustaining the involvement of a wide or at least useful variety of partners to work on the problem-solving process was difficult in Neighbourhood B. There were four main stakeholders who were noticeably absent from the NAGs that were studied for this research. First and perhaps the most glaring

example of this under-involvement was the lack of representation of members of the Muslim community, which has a substantial population in the neighbourhood, particularly in Omega Town. Indeed, during the period of the research a 19 year old Muslim man was stabbed to death in the convenience store on the main square in Omega Town, an incident which was only alluded to by the NAG around the time of its occurrence.

The second notably absent body were the private housing agency responsible for some of the blocks of flats, particularly in Gamma Town. Although they were invited to numerous NAGs, they consistently failed to attend. The NAG gathered evidence it had of anti-social behaviour and forms of environmental degradation and disorder that it had recorded in the flats, and brought these to the agency. Yet the agency was still unable to send a representative. The third notable absence was the 'business community'. Although there was some reference to trouble decreasing in Gamma Town because the local supermarket chain (operating as an enlarged corner shop) had put a security guard on the door, this was not due to any consultation with the NAG. The police officer responsible for the NAG had spoken to the manager and asked him to come along, but he was never represented. Although, when the problems were finally decided at the end of the consultation, there was an allusion to a consultation with the business community (and non-resident visitors to the neighbourhood) about their needs, which led to the priorities being somewhat altered from those chosen at the public meeting. The final missing set of stakeholders were the schools in the area. Although a head teacher did show up to the pre-NAG meeting, he commented on the lack of school representation at the meeting. Notwithstanding this, there was little representation of the schools in the later parts of the NAG process. Again, these

problems of getting stakeholders to become involved raise questions about how inclusive NAGs are, and also about how useful or practical they are seen by those in the community who are potential stakeholders. Involving as large a group of interested parties as possible is key to the NAG's notions of how it can be useful, and it is also one of the great challenges of nascent NAGs; how does a NAG get (and keep) important stakeholders involved?

Those who were members also experienced a rocky road in their continued involvement. One resident described feeling afraid of being on the NAG because he thought he would get threats due to his membership. The original chair who was selected for the NAG resigned after six months. There was thus no chair of the group for a number of months and this had the effect of making the NAG feel somewhat rudderless and lacking a driving force, or a 'social or moral entrepreneur'. This role falling largely to the facilitator from the community safety partnership.

The lack of involvement and underrepresentation on the NAG is a difficult thing to counter. It is almost impossible to work out what causes it and so one can only speculate on the potential reasons for it. One reason that springs to mind is that perhaps there is not such a big problem with crime and anti-social behaviour in the area, or at least residents have got to the stage where they can tolerate a minimum amount of it. Thus the work involved in chasing up the last acts of vandalism or disorder are just not worth it, and certainly not worth joining a NAG for. Perhaps, there is, to use Putnam's (2000) term, a lack of 'social capital' in the neighbourhood. By 'social capital' Putnam means the network of connections between people in a neighbourhood or community that leads them to interact together and provides, as he

sees it, many benefits such as lower crime, better educational attainment and decreases in loneliness and so forth. Another possibility is that there is a conflict over who should govern security in the neighbourhood (and indeed beyond). Perhaps residents and housing associations do not see it as their job. While the police and policy makers are trying to 'responsibilize' local communities, the communities or residents want the problem to be sorted out by someone else. This clash of ideas can be seen in the next chapter in the discussion about who is responsible for reducing the harms attached to bonfire night in Neighbourhood A. Or can it simply be said that the lack of resident motivation and in particular ethnic minority motivation to be part of a NAG is another example of a lack of trust in the police due to their reputation for dealing with minorities? (Goldsmith, 2005; Henry, 2007b)

Regardless of the reasons behind it, lack of involvement is a substantial problem and will continue to hinder any successful partnership approach to problem-solving in Neighbourhood B in the future.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the development of the NAG in Neighbourhood B from its initial public consultation phase up to the NAG's efforts to implement interventions to try to solve its priority problems. If a NAG can be viewed as a node of security governance (and it is posited in this research that this is a useful way of looking at it), the formation and early days of the NAG's work have a substantial impact on the character, technique and effectiveness of the node. This chapter has discussed some of the political implications of consultation. For example the cases of the local man whose personal bug bear was parking or the police officer who believed that outdoor

drinking was the root cause of virtually all anti-social behaviour. Another interesting aspect of the consultation process is that the third priority problem as defined by the voting system implemented on the night, that of the lack of police feedback, was completely ignored when deciding which problems to focus on. This research never got to the bottom of why this was ignored, although it is clear that a NAG organizer within the police or other agency decided that the priorities should not include remedying problems with police feedback after an incident has been reported.

Each of these examples demonstrate the political nature of the definition of a NAG's priority problems. In order not to find that their problems are skewed towards the interests of those who are loudest, best at motivating their political capital, or least afraid of the police, those establishing a new NAG have to try to be as inclusive as possible. The questions of how to achieve that inclusiveness, is something that each new NAG must attempt to deal with. Although no NAG can ever say with certainty, 'we have been inclusive enough', they do have to try and get on with their tasks even if some stakeholders are unwilling, or uninterested in being involved. Sustaining the involvement of diverse, useful and motivated partners and stakeholders is perhaps one of the greatest challenges for NAGs that hope to be successful nodes of security governance. Applying the skills and resources of such NAG members to the priority problems that the NAGs are working on will be the next challenge facing a new NAG. In the next chapter, that challenge is discussed in light of the observations made in Neighbourhood A as it worked on its priority problems.

Chapter 5

Case Study of Neighbourhood A – Problem-solving in an 'Established' NAG.

At the beginning of the process of rolling-out neighbourhood policing, the TVP chose two neighbourhoods to be 'pilot neighbourhoods' within the BCU where the research was based. Most neighbourhoods in the BCU are actually comprised of a number of beats, but both of the pilot neighbourhoods were built around a single beat within the BCU and each beat was a particularly big beat, with a population greater than 6,000 residents. Indeed the neighbourhood next to Neighbourhood A and within the same parish, is composed of ten beats and the other case study neighbourhood in this research, Neighbourhood B, is made up of eight beats.

Neighbourhood A is a housing estate which according to official crime statistics suffers from more crime than the other case-study neighbourhood or the other pilot neighbourhood. The other pilot neighbourhood, Neighbourhood C, was a small community with a low level of crime generally and a level of crime substantially lower (approximately half as much monthly reported crime) than that in Neighbourhood A.

This chapter looks at Neighbourhood A and how the NAG has gone about trying to solve problems in the neighbourhood. Unlike the previous discussion of Neighbourhood B, the research began later in the process of problem solving and as a result, the chapter describes a more established or 'mature' NAG which has been running for a substantially longer period than the NAG in Neighbourhood B. It also

does not discuss how the NAG came about deciding on its priority problems, but attempts to describe what it has tried to do about them. When discussing problem solving and partnership working among the 'greater police family' in Neighbourhood A, two key problems appear that the NAG has tried to deal with. The first is the problem, relatively unique to the estate, of 'garages'. More specifically the anti-social behaviour that appears to develop around the unused garages on the estate. The second is the ongoing discussion that the NAG had over the period of time studied, about how to try and reduce the impact of bonfire night in terms of both criminal damage and anti-social behaviour. These problems are not in fact the three main problems determined by the NAG in public consultation, which were anti-social behaviour, fly tipping and vandalism. Clearly the question of garages and bonfire night deal directly with anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood, but the other problems seemed to be somewhat sidelined at times. The problem of garages and bonfire night absorbed more time than any other problems during the period studied.

Solving the Problem of Garages

In parallel with the original construction of houses on the estate that makes up Neighbourhood A there was also the construction of a substantial number of garages for residents to park their cars in. The demand for these garages has dropped off considerably and many are now empty, or in the language of the council: 'void'. Perhaps this is as a result of the fact that the technology involved in preventing auto-crime has changed substantially, or because residents would rather park right beside their front door, or perhaps the rents charged by the council for their use were seen as prohibitive. Regardless of the reason, the garages have fallen somewhat out of favour and many have fallen into a state of disrepair. Young people have been known to

climb on top of the garages, rip the doors from them, congregate in or near damaged garages and to use them as a focal point for anti-social behaviour. How to solve the problems of disorder and anti-social behaviour associated with the garages has exercised the attention of the NAG for a substantial part of the research period.

There are, according to data presented by the council to the NAG in October 2007, 781 garages in Neighbourhood A and of these, 393 are in use, while the rest are 'void' or being repaired. However, as a representative of the council pointed out, there may be other garages, listed as void, that are being used 'informally'. This is of course a euphemism for trespass and illegal occupation, however, it appears to be an accepted form of illegality and not something that the council or the NAG seemed to concern themselves about.

Each neighbourhood in the TVP produces a Neighbourhood Priority Profile (NPP) on any particular issue. This is built on the SARA model outlined in the last chapter. It provides the NAG with a template to assist it in formally applying the methodologies of the SARA system. It does so by 'asking' the NAG to fill out what their problem is and answer questions regarding each of the S-A-R-A steps. This is different to the process of determining problems for SARA by brainstorming, as described in Chapter 4. Such brainstorming is essentially the 'scanning' part of the SARA system. The NPP is a bureaucratic exercise which is intended to assist NAGs in consistently applying the entire of the SARA system, by obliging them to complete set questions and descriptions.

Thus, within the scanning section there is a box into which a description of the problem must be entered. After all, if a NAG cannot define the problem, one could ask if there is in fact a problem. The first box asks; 'What is the problem that has been identified and what evidence is there?' In the context of Neighbourhood A which has selected anti-social behaviour particularly related to garages as one of its main priority problems, it is useful to include here the definition of the problem as set out in the NPP.

The problem of garages, or as it is formally referred to on the front of the NPP, 'Garage Blocks', was selected uniquely within the BCU by Neighbourhood A. Other neighbourhoods had chosen anti-social behaviour as a problem, and this involved some concern over garages, but only Neighbourhood A had selected the problem of garages as being a priority problem. The problem is described in the following terms in the NPP;

Local Youths congregate around the garage blocks situated at various locations across the estate. This leads to a number of crime types from Burglary and Criminal Damage to Drug and Alcohol abuse to Public Disorder.

There are numerous reports from a variety of sources recorded on Databases owned by the partner organisations.

The problem was highlighted when the EVA took place and featured heavily at the [Neighbourhood A] Public Meeting.

Within the analysis section there is a box to be completed detailing the 'underlying causes of the problem' having reference to the PAT. This details who, what or where has been described as the victim, offender and location. The NPP is essentially a pro-forma method of putting to paper the results of the type of brain-storming that were visible in the problem definition process in Neighbourhood B (chapter 4) and which had taken place before this research began in Neighbourhood A. The victims and offenders were relatively obvious (tenants, taxpayers etc for the former and young people for the latter) although it is interesting to see a category of offender inserted described as 'illegal business residents'. However, it is in the description of the *location* of the problem that we get a better description of exactly why garages might be a problem in Neighbourhood A;

Garages throughout the Estate which are detached from houses. In particular those in [three named culs-de-sac]. Generally they are not overlooked, in blocks with flat roofs.

The rents are too high, repairs are sub-standard and garages are too small for today's cars as well as there being restrictions on usage. Therefore many garages are left empty, fall into disrepair. The current housing budget does not allow for maintenance and locks are sub standard.

Young people are then attracted to the area, the roofs are easily accessed and the garages provide a good 'goal' area for football. There are no other local areas to play football with a goal and the young people have 'fun' playing here.

From within this description of the underlying causes one can draw out some interesting ideas about how the problem came about. The development of a consumer economy that has produced and made affordable bigger cars, even in relatively deprived housing estates may have been some sort of a root cause of the problem. Thus driving down the value of a garage, which is restricted in its use to storing cars and certain other goods; their dereliction thus providing a criminogenic location in which young people are able to congregate. However, perhaps 'criminogenic' is too strong a word, there is no real suggestion that the behaviour of the young people is in fact criminal, but merely anti-social. Playing football is not criminal, even if the gate one plays it against is of poor quality. The dereliction of the garage blocks could perhaps be better described as 'ASB-ogenic'. This distinction is important to maintain, even though there is much literature on the criminogenic nature of some architecture, applying the word to anti-social behaviour risks raising anti-social behaviour to the level of criminal activity, which it is not, although it could be suggested that that is how it may be viewed by central government and many community safety practitioners, including the police (see discussion in chapter 2).

Before going on to look at the possible interventions which might help solve or ameliorate the problem of garage blocks, it is perhaps worth noting an interesting comment that was made by one resident who attended the NAG. She told the group 'there are no problems on my eight garages, there are no kids on the roof', yet she said she would prefer not to explain why this was the case in front of the police officers who were present. What she did to protect her garages is perhaps illegal or merely big talk, but it is, at least, intriguing.

What are the Possible Responses?

The NAG discussed a number of possible responses to the problem. The first response was to either demolish some of the empty or, as the Council refer to them, 'void' garages. Alternatively efforts can be made to construct a favourable economic incentive for residents to occupy them, that is to say, reduce the rents and increase the state of repair of the blocks. The other responses, which are set out clearly within the NPP were, to approach school assemblies and try to raise awareness of the problem, to erect signs informing residents how to report damage to garages and an enforcement operation what was being conducted regarding the estate, but being somewhat refocussed onto the question of anti-social behaviour as it relates to garages.

Demolition or Rent Reduction

The obvious response to the problem of outdated garage stock on the estate is to remove the garages that are causing the problems. In March 2007 a report was given to the NAG about one cul-de-sac in Neighbourhood A in which the garage blocks were removed. Criminal damage in the cul-de-sac was almost completely eliminated. In this cul-de-sac, one attendee proudly announced, 'the garages are problem-solved'. However, things are not quite as simple as merely removing all the garages. First of all, it is probably quite easy to spot that the problem may have simply moved to another cul-de-sac or garage block. This appears to have been what happened. Reports of criminal damage (one-third of which was to garage blocks) and anti-social behaviour in the neighbouring cul-de-sac increased substantially. This appears to be a straightforward case of displacement. However the police officers were careful to point out that they did not know if these problems were caused by the same young

people. Thus, they could not confirm or deny the suggestion that it was a displacement of crime and anti-social behaviour from the first cul-de-sac.

As well as the problem of displacement caused if the garage blocks are merely removed, there is also the obstacle of cost. Even though the garages are only barely half full, they provide the council, and in particular the housing section, with not inconsiderable revenues. The figures given to the NAG in August 2007 show that it costs £1,000 to remove a garage. Although this figure seemed to rise to £1,200 in later meetings, for reasons that are unclear. The housing department receive rent of £500 a year from a garage that is in use. The costs of repairing a garage are disproportionately high, being £500 to replace a door. There is a clear incentive for the council to continue to rent those garages which are occupied and producing revenue, while holding off on removing the void garages where the problem behaviour is reportedly occurring. There is also something of a cyclicity to the delapidation process. As rent revenues are reduced due to the delapidation, the housing department has less money to spend on repair, making the garages less attractive to renters, thus reducing the number of renters and the revenue they generate further, producing a cycle of garage delapidation, which cannot fund its own demolition or removal.

In May 2007 a consultant employed by the council attended the NAG. He was commissioned to work on the garages and attempting to improve the arrangement for garages in four sites in the city. Attending this NAG was, he said, 'my exercise in democratic engagement'. As part of his pilot scheme, he intended to spend £70,000 on demolition. It was the consultant's position that the garages built in Neighbourhood A

were built during a period of poor planning and would not be built in such a fashion today. In contemporary architecture a garage would only be built within the boundaries of a property, thus 'designing out crime'. The chair was very keen to impress on the consultant the potential for tangible feedback from investment in garages (and their demolition) in Neighbourhood A, and the consultant was in full agreement. At this point in the roll-out of neighbourhood policing in the BCU, there were only thirteen neighbourhoods operational, and only the two pilot neighbourhoods (including Neighbourhood A) had been in operation for over a year. Given that this was the only NAG that had made garages a priority problem, and that it was one of only two fully established NAGs, it would appear that there was no better place to conduct a 'democratic engagement' about the problem of garages on estates in the city. Having fully discussed the possibilities of the pilot, the logic of using Neighbourhood A as one of the four sites and having been assured of the full support of the NAG and the councillors in attendance, the consultant left and was never seen again. He was contacted a number of times and asked to attend the NAG or provide a report of his progress, but no such information was ever forthcoming to the NAG.

The problem-solving process as applied to garages in Neighbourhood A was further hindered by the fact that nobody from the housing department at the Council attended any of the NAGs during the period of this research (a period amounting to well over a year). At one of the meetings it was decided that the NAG had to gain a greater understanding of how the process of housing decisions was made at the council and in particular how decisions about garages were made. The NAG felt that the process was not transparent and this meant it did not have the capacity to challenge the housing

department or in some way create some form of leverage over them in order to oblige them to attend. This raises questions (discussed further in chapter 6) about how much of a success multi-agency problem-solving can be if there is one player who will not play. This is a particular problem in this case where that player is clearly the only one who 'has the ball'. Towards the end of the process, there was some talk of bringing a complaint about the lack of attendance of the housing authority to the Joint Tactics and Tasking Committee and trying to gain some sort of leverage through that forum. As set out above, in the course of this research, such efforts never succeeded.

Alongside the discussion of the possibility of demolishing void garages there was also a pilot scheme run by the housing department in a number of culs-de-sac to try to increase the number of people using the garages. However, this raised the problem of creating a 'two-tier payment level' whereby established renters would pay more than those who began renting under the pilot scheme. There were also some questions within the NAG about how well the scheme was understood by eligible residents, and whether this was affecting the uptake of the reduced rent garages. However, as no representative of housing ever attended a NAG meeting, these questions remained completely unanswered.

As time went on, the NAG began to develop a growing sense of frustration at the lack of progress. The chair was noted as saying that the process felt like 'treading water, or perhaps even treading mud', as the group tried to navigate a path towards some progress on the problem of garages. This was countered somewhat by the efforts of the facilitator to collate previous, and possible future, responses to the problem. This led to the NAG adopting three further approaches to the problem; raising awareness

of the problem at school assemblies, erecting signs detailing how to report damage to garages and enforcing the law.

Raising Awareness of the Problem at School Assemblies

This is the first response set out in the NPP under the Response component of the SARA process. The latter three responses discussed here were chosen at the end of a 'board blast of options' or 'brainstorming' session run by the facilitator from the community safety partnership. The list included the demolition of the garages, but this was not included in the NPP. As discussed above, it is a solution to the problem that is not within the NAG's control. The board blast produced a list of suggestions including *inter alia*;

- re-activating youth clubs;
- running an advertisement campaign on the use of the garages;
- changing the use of the garages;
- regularly inspecting the garages;
- increasing neighbourhood watch;
- providing alternative parking;
- rewarding reporting;
- involving youth in the issues;
- sponsorship of garages; and
- CCTV.

The NAG decided to pursue the options of educating young people, erecting enforcement signs and enforcing the law. The NPP walks the NAG through the application of the potential solution to the problem by asking a set of questions which

demand direct answers. In the case of this response option, the questions were answered thus:

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Answers for Option 1</u>
What response is being suggested?	Educate young people through schools
What is the objective of this?	To increase awareness of the issues
How will success be measured?	Numbers of assemblies attended and numbers of pupils contacted
What resources are needed?	SCU Wardens / Community Mobiliser
What are the advantages/disadvantages of this option?	(blank)
Who would own this response?	[Name Given]

Figure 5.1: Sample Neighbourhood Priority Profile responses for Option 1: Educating young people through school visits.

This framework is considered essential for the successful application of a SARA model because it sets out in strict terms what the parameters of the option are, what is expected of it, and perhaps most importantly, who is responsible for implementing it. It is this tangibility of objective and quantifiable performance indicators that is central to the process because it is supposed to prevent poorly thought out options being given unrealistic goals in solving intractable problems. The NPP is the coalface of the application of the SARA model to policing problems at a neighbourhood level. It is interesting to see that the outcome for measuring success in this case is based on numbers of schools visited, a measure which has no tangible bearing on the problem which the option sets out to solve. This is perhaps indicative of a longer term trend to measure the internal action rather than the effect of police activities and it has been a trend throughout the criminal justice system for some years. As Garland puts it;

Increasingly these organizations seek to be evaluated by reference to internal goals, over which they have near total control, rather than by reference to social goals such as reducing crime rates, catching criminals or reforming inmates, all of which involve too many contingencies and uncertainties. The performance indicators tend to measure 'outputs' rather than 'outcomes', what the organization *does*, rather than what, if anything, it *achieves*. (1996: 458, original emphasis)

This inward looking approach to measuring success is perhaps hard to avoid, given the almost intractable nature of anti-social behaviour. It is hard to see how much of an impact speaking to school children about hanging around outside garages and using them as goals will have on their behaviour, short of inspiring some children to whom the idea had not occurred, to use the garage doors as goals. Yet if it were to be a successful intervention, how could the causal linkages between speaking to school assemblies and reducing the problems associated with garages ever be traced? The impact of the intervention on the problem is far too indirect and subject to the vicissitudes of interpretation and other social influences to be tangibly connected to the problem at hand. It is of course possible that such an intervention has an impact in terms of police-community relations, or raising awareness among children and parents of the work of the NAG and the police. However, such awareness-raising is a somewhat different goal to that of reducing the anti-social behaviour associated with garage blocks on the estate.

Erecting Signs Detailing How to Report Damage to Garages

With regard to this problem, the NPP sets out again the reasoning and success-measurement-framework for this intervention. In this instance, erecting signs near garages is hoped to increase the reporting of damage to the relevant authorities and speed up the repair of damage. It is also hoped that the presence of the signs will raise awareness of the issue of damage to garages. This apparently simple procedure was actually a substantially more complicated undertaking than it might first appear. Raising the funding for the provision of signs and prompting those who were in a position to erect the signs to do so took a substantial amount of time. It was an indication of the problems facing a group which has no resources of its own, but must try to work together to motivate and influence those who do have control over resources, to use them in a way favourable to the NAG's goals.

Using a 'nodal governance' (Crawford, 2006a; Shearing, 2007; Wood and Shearing, 2007) approach can be a useful way to understand the NAG's work in this regard. If the NAG is one of a number of interconnected 'nodes' in the governance of security in Neighbourhood A, yet it has no resources of its own, it must use its network of connections and representation to mobilize the resources of other nodes to provide the security it aspires to for the neighbourhood. This process is central to the partnership process and is discussed further in the next chapter.

Enforcing the Law

The final approach to the problem is built on the classic 'law and order' model; 'the police must enforce the law'. Indeed at the July 2007 NAG when frustration

at the problems of dealing with agencies about the garages had driven the group's morale to a low ebb, it was a police officer who in trying to motivate the group announced that 'we have got to go out there and kick some arses'. Enforcement, it seems, is always popular. The NPP states that the aim of this intervention is '[t]o enforce the law regarding ASB and give warning letters to parents of young people caught committing ASB'. Again, the measure of success is the output rather than the outcome, in that the intervention will be measured on how many 'yellow cards' and warning letters are issued by the police. This desire to demonstrate actions by showing that an increased number of 'yellow cards' have been given to the 'anti-social' may have the paradoxical effect of creating ASB-ogenic scenarios. This could occur by increasing contact between police and young people, or by reconsidering youth behaviour as anti-social in order to increase the opportunities for 'yellow cards'. It is unlikely to have any meaningful connection with how much anti-social behaviour there actually is in any given neighbourhood.

The police officer at the July 2007 meeting was keen to point out that there was a process of intelligence gathering which assisted them in targetting anti-social behaviour. 'We've got our spies, for want of a better word. Now we're trying to focus it on the garages.' However there were problems with gathering such intelligence. People who were in neighbourhood watch schemes were seen as 'grassing' on their neighbours and indeed, the word 'spy' was often used in a negative context by those who were threatening neighbourhood watch members.

An 'enforcement operation' is almost completely a police centred response and one that demands little assistance from partner organizations, although housing agencies can be involved in the process of using the removal of tenure as a form of punishment should enough evidence of anti-social behaviour accumulate (Hughes and Rowe, 2007: 325). However the enforcement operation that the police were speaking of attempting to apply in the neighbourhood was in fact deployed in a larger area which encompassed Neighbourhood A. This actually had the effect of causing some abstraction of police officers from Neighbourhood A. To counter this, the facilitator suggested, the NAG would need to provide evidence that there was anti-social behaviour that could be successfully targeted using the resources and officers which were being used to battle anti-social behaviour in the wider area, and attempting to have them focussed on Neighbourhood A. Again this fits into a wider picture of the NAG as a node of security governance, attempting to use evidence and persuasion to draw resources controlled by other nodes into its area, for the benefit of its own public. How successfully they manage to do that is largely down to the skills, capacity, connections and tenacity of the NAG members. However, what is apparent is that as more and more nodes (NAGs in this analysis) become operational and competent in the struggle for resources, the resources will naturally become more stretched, and the successes of resource allocation will become fewer, or at least smaller. How those local political battles play out will be interesting to see.

Bonfire Nights at Neighbourhood A

The second problem that is discussed in this chapter is the problem of bonfire night and the anti-social behaviour associated with it. It was not set out as a priority

problem by the NAG, however it was discussed extensively at the meetings and the group gave it extensive consideration and attention. While it may not have been one of the three priority problems (in the sense that the number one priority was anti-social behaviour relating to garages) it certainly comes under the rubric of a broader concept of anti-social behaviour. It was never considered that the NAG was acting beyond its remit in dealing with or discussing the partnership approach to bonfire night and indeed it seems an appropriate forum in which to attempt to construct a multi-agency response to an annual problem.

Over the course of this research there were three bonfire nights which the NAG dealt with in Neighbourhood A. Each night was not dealt with in the same way and the NAG has spent a considerable amount of time concerning itself with analysing the different responses, discussing how effective they were and trying to learn how to improve on them. As an example of problem-oriented policing in practice, a discussion of the case of bonfire nights in Neighbourhood A is a useful way to illustrate some of the difficulties that can arise.

Bonfire night is a tradition dating back to the Seventeenth Century and derives from the burning of an effigy of Guy Fawkes on a bonfire as a symbol of a village's hatred of Fawkes. Fawkes was captured while trying to execute the famous 'gunpowder plot' in 1605. The plot was the response of radicalised Catholics to a period of repression under King James I. Fawkes and his co-conspirators were attempting to blow up the newly built Houses of Parliament on their opening day. They hoped that by killing the King, his heir and all the protestant bishops and lords, they would throw the country into a crisis and allow a Catholic to get onto the throne. The plot was intercepted on 4

November and Fawkes was captured and tortured on the rack to elicit a confession. The confession was read to the jury and he was duly found guilty. He and his co-conspirators were sentenced to be hung, drawn and quartered at the end of their trial the following January (Clapham, 2007). Since then, throughout England, and in some parts of the Commonwealth, an effigy of Guy Fawkes, traditionally known as a 'Guy', is burnt on bonfires to celebrate the capture of those responsible for the gunpowder plot.

There is a strong tradition of bonfire night events in Neighbourhood A and this has lead to the evening becoming considered a problem by some residents and local policy makers. Unlike some other problems determined by neighbourhood groups, the 'harm' that can be caused by bonfire night is clear to be seen. To fuel the fire, some bonfire aficionados have torn down fences and ripped apart the sheds of local residents. Bonfires themselves can also get out of hand, running the risk of burning down local houses or trees. The remains of a bonfire have to be cleared away, often leaving unsightly scars on the grass where the fire took place. These scars can be seen for a long time after the bonfire and can prevent the space being used at other times of the year as a green amenity. The events themselves can lead to children and others running the risk of getting burnt in the fire itself, for example while tending or stoking it or cooking potatoes in it, a traditional bonfire night food. Similar accidents occur each year at fires when the fireworks, which often accompany 'Guy Fawkes' Night' are released by people who are not familiar with the dangers involved in using fireworks. The fire brigade are called out far more on bonfire night than they would expect to in the days and weeks before and after the event, thus distracting them from their essential role extinguishing fires that would have occurred regardless of the

incidence of bonfire night. In short, it is clear why bonfire night might be classified a 'problem' within the terms of problem-oriented policing.

Despite these problems, bonfire night continues to be a popular draw and focus for numerous communities. Within Neighbourhood A there is significant competition between different parts of the neighbourhood to outdo one another by having a bigger or more impressive bonfire night celebration. The night's popularity is not swayed by the above list of problems that can be associated with the event.

Each of the potential harms is a risk and none of them are inevitable parts of any bonfire. If the site is chosen well, the fuel is legally obtained, children are supervised, fireworks are released carefully and the site is tidied up properly afterwards, there is no major problem to be associated with the celebrations. In such a case, a local group can have a safe bonfire, although accidents can happen to even the most careful. However while there is no guarantee that every bonfire will be a 'bad' one, every bonfire has the potential to be a 'bad' one. Every bonfire is a risk.

The definition of the bonfire night as a problem to be solved by policing is a practical example from this research of the obsession with 'risk' and risk management that has crept into contemporary society and its policy makers, including the police (Beck, 1992; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997). The problem is not the bonfire itself, but the risk of damage associated with the bonfire. Of course when you aggregate a number of bonfires across a neighbourhood, city or constabulary, then there will inevitably be a certain amount of harm arising from running the risk of holding bonfires, but no individual bonfire can be predicted with certainty to produce that harm.

As a result of the risks associated with bonfire night, the evening has been targetted in Neighbourhood A as a problem for the attention of the NAG. Reducing impromptu mismanaged local bonfires will reduce the damage associated with bad bonfires. In each of the three years observed, a different approach was taken and in each of the three years, a different result occurred.

Bonfire Night 2005

Bonfire night 2005 was considered the greatest success of the three approaches taken to the problems of bonfire night. At a constabulary wide partnership meeting detailing the reasoning behind neighbourhood policing and its potential benefits to partners in April 2006 (Thames Valley Partnership, 2006), the local neighbourhood officer from Neighbourhood A spoke at some length of the process of working with the community and achieving such a successful result. This was, he said, a perfect example of how effective partnership problem-solving can be. In 2005 the NAG, the fire brigade and local community members worked together to hold an 'official' bonfire. This involved having a bonfire on a selected site, with a fire brigade vehicle there for safety. Fireworks were provided and residents groups produced tables of food for the evening. The event passed off safely and by all accounts everyone enjoyed themselves. Fire brigade call outs were dramatically reduced with only two call outs to Neighbourhood A in 2005 compared to eleven in 2004.

Bonfire Night 2006

In 2006 the event was less successful. Although it was still considered a success in terms of developing community cohesion, it did not substantially reduce the number

of call outs of either the fire brigade or the police. In hindsight members of the NAG repeatedly point out that the 2006 event was not as good because it was not in fact held on bonfire night, but the preceding Saturday evening. Although this was only the night before the traditional date of bonfire night, and the attraction of holding a family event on a weekend is easy to understand, the draw of 5 November as a day to be celebrated remained stronger and fires were held in Neighbourhood A that may have been avoided had the event been held a day later. The police reported that there were forty-three calls to their switchboard from Neighbourhood A on the weekend of Friday 3 – Monday 6 November 2006 comprising fourteen for anti-social behaviour relating to bonfires, a substantial increase on the previous year.

It is an interesting question, for which an easy answer cannot be provided, why a bonfire the night before, with the attractions of central organization and the numerous parallel events, would not sate the desire to hold other fires the next night. It would appear that some days, imbued as they are with cultural significance, are important for their dates as much as for the activity concerned.

Bonfire Night 2007

No event was organized the third year, 2007. At the November NAG meeting, nine days later, the police reported that there had been a 'dramatic improvement over last year with half the reported incidents for a slightly longer weekend period' (Neighbourhood A NAG meeting minutes, November 2007). For the weekend of Friday 2 – Tuesday 6 November 2007 there were thirty eight calls to the police from Neighbourhood A and these included only six for anti-social behaviour related to bonfires.

The fire brigade reported to the December NAG meeting a similar drop in bonfire activity. In 2007 six streets had bonfires, down from fourteen the previous year. There had been twenty-one call-outs of the fire brigade, with nine being in one location where there had been intimidation.

Positive and Negative Approaches: Liberty v Order

The obvious conclusion from these attempts to problem-solve the bonfire night is that community events do not have any impact on whether bonfire night is a damaging evening or not. However there are other forces at play in the reaction to bonfire night. Parallel to the community event there is also the possibility of running a campaign of prevention and the balancing of these two approaches has been the subject of some debate within the NAG. One NAG member argued that the two approaches should be differentiated into two categories. The first is what was termed the *positive* approach of holding an event to draw the community together and remove the need to hold impromptu private bonfires by providing a centrally organized one. The second, or *negative*, approach involves preventive action on the part of the police and the council in finding the caches of fuel and removing them, or hosing them with water so as to be unusable.

This negative approach was applied to differing degrees in each year. In 2005 a strong preventive approach was taken in tandem with the development of a community evening. The police found stores of fuel and had them removed or hosed with water, the council removed any excess materials that could be found and it was difficult for residents to fuel impromptu private bonfires. In 2006 these prevention techniques

were not as aggressively pursued. One resident at the NAG pointed out that the council arrived and took away the materials two weeks before bonfire night, leaving ample time for the collection of more materials. The 2007 bonfire night, having no central community bonfire did receive attention in terms of preventive techniques. PCSOs were charged with finding combustibles and removing them. The housing authorities wrote letters to people explaining that if materials are burnt it will be considered anti-social behaviour. As the chair of the NAG put it; 'in 2005 we had a positive and negative approach, in 2006 we had just a positive approach and in 2007 we have had just a negative approach, what sort of message does that send out?'

This raised quite a bit of debate amongst NAG members. Some felt that there was an understandable community interest in having a bonfire and that some bonfires should be allowed and accepted as normal behaviour on bonfire night. Others felt strongly that this was a case of wanton vandalism and arson and should be stamped out severely. These two sides argued their case in a fashion reminiscent of a classical civil liberties versus law and order debate.

The damage, it was claimed by those on the law and order side, is so extensive that it can be seen on Google Earth (an internet application which allows users to view satellite photographs of most parts of the UK). The implication appears to be that in some way the damage was akin to the Great Wall of China in its bulk and visibility from space. However, after spending some time on Google Earth looking at various parts of Neighbourhood A, which can be viewed extensively with the program, I was unable to find the scars that were supposed to be thus visible.

The civil libertarian argument was that the bonfires were going to go on, and that people wanted them. Of course the damage from the reckless bonfires should be ameliorated or prevented, but responsible residents had every right to celebrate with a bonfire.

Alongside the level of damage, those on the law and order side (and one employee of the council in particular) argued that to organize an event in order to reduce bonfires effectively amounted to rewarding vandalism. Enforcement alone, he argued, was the only way to prevent the community from feeling that they would have a centrally organized event laid on to induce them not to conduct spontaneous bonfires.

In the end the NAG resolved the question of whether it was better to take a positive or a negative approach by deciding it best to take both. There was universal consensus that the first bonfire night was a success.

Solving the Problem

It is hard to see that the problems attached to bonfire night in Neighbourhood A can be completely solved. At its best (the 2005 bonfire night), the NAG's problem-solving approach reduced the damage that was done by bonfire night substantially, but there were still call-outs and there were still private bonfires. The best that can be hoped for then is that the problem be managed. There will always be a risk of injury and death on bonfire night, bonfires are inherently risky ventures. When defining the problem to be solved the problem can only be considered in terms of risk; the risk of destruction of property and injury to people. The solution therefore can also only be framed in terms of risk management. The solution is a reduction in that risk, but risk

can never be completely avoided. The evaluation of success in dealing with the problem of bonfire night is a matter of degree.

As members of the NAG admitted, there is no way to stop fences being ripped down and the doors torn from garages unless there were to be 'a PC on every fence'. This is a typical example of what Morgan and Newburn (1997) call the insatiable desire for bobbies on the beat. The idea was only mooted as a statement of how ridiculous such a settlement would be. Obviously there would be resource implications to the placement of a vast number of constables around the neighbourhood, as well as implications for how people would enjoy the night under the eye of hundreds of yellow jacketed officers. The risk of some fences going missing is not, it appears, worth the investment of a 'total enforcement' approach. There is then, a scale of possible techniques that could be applied.

It was never suggested at the NAG that bonfire night be banned. At the height of their argument the 'law and order' proponents were merely talking about prosecuting vandals and attempting to make fires difficult to arrange by confiscating fuel, as well as threatening residents with Anti-social Behaviour Contracts if they conducted spontaneous fires that caused damage. The possibility of these prosecutions and curfews is raised here to show that there are opportunities for the police to use severe tactics to clamp down on bonfires in Neighbourhood A. That they do not use these 'nuclear' approaches shows that despite the availability of heavy-handed techniques, such approaches may not always be considered to be the best. Implicit in a decision not to use these laws is an acceptance that the repercussions, in terms of abuse of civil liberties, police-neighbourhood relations and cost would not be worth the potential

achievements in reducing criminal damage or fire-brigade call outs. If the police are to maintain policing-by-consent, they will need to be more subtle in their approach.

As discussed above, the range of options that the NAG had at its disposal includes approaches that are more refined than a 'total enforcement' approach. The responses will come from somewhere within this spectrum and the solution will also fall within a spectrum of possible outcomes ranging from a complete ban on bonfires, which may eliminate all the criminal damage from the evening, to a laissez-faire approach which might allow spontaneous bonfires to spring up wherever there is demand and fuel. The temptation with this analysis, is to assume that the further along the spectrum of possible interventions you go in the direction of enforcement, the greater the success of the solution provided. The different combinations of interventions discussed above produced different results, and in 2007 the enforcement approach worked well. However the 'positive' approach in combination with enforcement worked better in 2005. While these observations are useful, it is also important to remember that bonfire night in Neighbourhood A is not a perfect laboratory location, nor are the interventions perfectly planned social science experiments and this makes comparison difficult. Each year, bonfire night falls on different nights of the week and this can have an impact on the size of local bonfires, whether centrally planned or spontaneous. Similarly, there could be other reasons that bonfires have a less damaging effect on the area, for example if those who would normally tear down fences or conduct other forms of criminal behaviour have desisted from crime for other reasons, such as growing out of it, or being too busy with work or family commitments. Conclusions about what is the best tool in the NAG's toolkit to use for bonfire night are difficult to come to based on only three years of attempts to solve the

problem of bonfire night.

At the November meeting immediately after the 2007 bonfire night, the NAG began planning the implementation of a centrally organized bonfire night. It may not seem like much to plan a bonfire, but the job is a substantial one and there is reluctance among many people to undertake the responsibility for the task. In 2005 an officer from the Fire Brigade took control of the event and organized it completely. The intention was that in establishing the precedent of a centrally organized bonfire, the hope was that 'the community' would then take it over and organize it themselves. This approach is a paradigm example of the 'responsibilization' process referred to in chapter 1 whereby the body known as the 'community' is expected to sort out its own security and protection for itself. An interesting exchange occurred at the October 2007 NAG meeting between a representative of the council (a member of staff, not a councilor) and a resident. The council worker felt that residents have a huge role to play in organizing an intervention and in informing the police about stashes of fuel and planned spontaneous bonfires. The resident on the other hand completely disagreed. The responsibility for ensuring the security of bonfire night lay with the authorities. In a nodal governance of security analysis, this debate is over which node (or nodes) of security provision is responsible. The resident says the authorities (and this is clearly a plurality of nodes; *inter alia*, the police, fire brigade and council) while the council worker says that the community is the correct node to provide their own security. Either way, neither party thinks that they are the one responsible. This raises interesting questions about democracy in local government. The council staff are employees of the councillors who are elected by the residents. At some level, in simple democratic theory, they should receive the services they desire. As discussed

above (chapter 2) the provision of security by governments based on democratic desires is a difficult question and one which neighbourhood policing is supposed to address. What is clear from this example, and from other discussions at NAG meetings, is that there was virtual unanimity that a centrally organized bonfire is a good idea and worth pursuing for 2008, but there was a marked lack of people or organizations coming forward to offer to organize it. As one member said during a NAG meeting, 'there is nobody to take ownership of this project'. Regarding bonfire night in Neighbourhood A, the problem with the problem is that it is nobody's problem.

It was clear from the Fire Brigade's report read out at the December 2007 NAG meeting that the Fire Brigade did not feel they could justify the outlay involved in organizing a large event solely for one neighbourhood. This assertion, that the intervention was not cost effective, chimes uncomfortably with the claims made by many that the reduction in call-outs had made a huge saving for the Fire Brigade. Indeed this assertion was made by the neighbourhood officer at the Thames Valley Partnership's *Neighbourhood Policing – A Joint Agenda* conference in April 2006 (Thames Valley Partnership, 2006). It was delivered as a sort of rallying cry of how successful neighbourhood policing problem-solving can be and indeed it was reasonably convincing. He argued that each call out that a fire engine must make, regardless of whether there was an actual fire or not, placed a substantial marginal cost on the Fire Brigade and reducing call-outs *ipso facto* reduces costs by a multiple of thousands of pounds. This, the logic goes, is a large saving for a small investment in sending one fire engine to Neighbourhood A and even paying for the raw materials for a safe bonfire. If this is true, and it is a compelling argument, why would the Fire

Brigade be so reluctant to organize a bonfire? It seems to be a type of false economy whereby the pain of the preventive outlay seems to have a greater impact on Fire Brigade administrators than the pain of the outlay on extra call-outs.

Alongside the Fire Brigade's reluctance to operate the event, the other potential 'community' organizations are also reluctant to step in. The NAG itself was slow to begin discussing bonfire night in the early part of 2007 and its discussions and procrastinations ultimately lead to no intervention taking place in 2007. In the immediate aftermath of bonfire night 2007, there was some discussion as to what to do the following year. It was agreed that a centrally organized bonfire was the best approach, but it was also apparent that nobody wanted to step in. Those who might naturally be expected to fill this role, such as youth groups or the council are reluctant to take it on. The considerable risks of running a 'safe' bonfire appear to produce a genuine fear of taking responsibility. The problems of passing health and safety standards for an organization's employees appear to be a greater concern even than the cost of the operation and indeed there were some volunteers to help organize and run the bonfire night intervention but no organization was happy to take ownership. The only group with the expertise to do this, it was felt, is the Fire Brigade.

The Fire Brigade in their report on bonfire night in Neighbourhood A told the NAG that they would be willing to support the event but not to hold it under their 'banner'. They could not book the land with the council or obtain third party insurance, but it appeared that they could possibly provide the fire safety aspect, which would be essential to the success of any bonfire. The NAG, upon hearing this, debated if it was in a position to run the event. The statement; 'The NAG has no funds, we need a body

to take this forward', was met with a more enthusiastic statement from the neighbourhood officer that the NAG could do it. There were bodies who had given funds before, the council, the housing agency and the community safety partnership for example but things would have to get moving soon. So in December 2007, the initial plans were laid to obtain the funding, land, insurance and fire safety support for a centrally organized bonfire in Neighbourhood A, a full eleven months in advance of the event itself. Funding has to be applied for this far in advance because council and other budgets are set early and are not flexible enough to allow for investment in a community event that they become aware of closer to the date. If one thing has been learnt about solving the problems associated with bonfire night, it is that responsibility and action have to be taken early for there to be any chance of a successful positive intervention.

Conclusion

The NAG at Neighbourhood A has applied a number of different approaches to solving some of its priority problems, although it has focused primarily on the problems of anti-social behaviour as they apply to the garages on the estate. This chapter has looked at those interventions as well as the work of the NAG in attempting to reduce the impact of anti-social behaviour deriving from the events of bonfire night in the neighbourhood. It is clear from the problem-solving efforts on both problems that the NAG has a range of choices about how to deal with its problems. Some of these choices may be of a more 'law and order' or 'enforcement' nature, while at the other end of the spectrum there are options which could be more libertarian and supportive. This is particularly exemplified by the divergence in opinion among NAG members about how to respond to bonfire night, with some

members preferring a 'law and order' approach while others preferred to have a community event which would reduce the number of informal bonfires. The range of options open to a NAG can thus expose the differences of opinion among its members. These differences may stem from their role, training or perspective (eg as an agency representative, police officer or resident) or might simply be a personal preference for one particular method, or a conviction that such a method will be more successful. Whichever motivation drives the members, it is clear from this research that the NAG does not have a unanimous perspective on what ways it should intervene. The ongoing process of negotiation which every NAG must deal with is typical of all partnership arrangements working on the co-production of community safety. It is to these partnership arrangements that the next chapter turns as it looks at the NAG as a node of security governance influenced by its construction as a partnership of neighbourhood stakeholders.

Chapter 6

Neighbourhood Action Groups as Partnership Nodes in the Co-Production of Community Safety

The Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) is an obvious example of a localized partnership arrangement designed to work on solving problems, reducing crime and increasing community safety for residents and other stakeholders in a given neighbourhood. Chapter 7 discusses some of the issues with partnership working as they apply to problem-oriented policing specifically. However partnership working, in NAGs and beyond, in order to co-produce community safety is about more than merely problem-solving (although that process operates as a central part of the partnership process). This chapter looks at the data collected in this research from the perspective of broader considerations of partnership working in the co-construction of community safety.

The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* places obligations on local government agencies to work together to reduce crime and disorder by operating statutory based Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs). As discussed above (chapter 2) these central partnerships are obliged to conduct reviews of crime and disorder in their area and attempt to respond in a strategic manner. This marks a substantial change in how community safety is intended to be co-produced, a process of change that goes back to the Morgan Report (Home Office, 1991) which first suggested, at government level, that partnership working was the best way to tackle crime. The *Crime and Disorder Act* does diverge somewhat from the Morgan Report in how it places duties on agencies to develop community safety strategies (Crawford, 2007: 894). It is

within this 'new' legislative framework that the co-production of community safety envisioned in the process of neighbourhood policing (both in the local neighbourhoods studied, and nationally) has to operate. Understanding how these processes have developed on the ground has been one of the central inquiries of this research. It is thus important to discuss the experience of partnership working that was observed in the case study neighbourhoods. This has to be considered in light of the fact that the field of community safety is a fast-moving and quick-changing one. The impact and practical outcomes from the partnership efforts are still not completely understood. As Hughes points out;

It is important to remember that the long-term consequences and policy processes resulting from this 'watershed' legislation still cannot be predicted with any certainty. ... Remember, a decade is not a long time in the history of managing social problems! (2006b: 80)

The politics and policies surrounding efforts to produce community safety are constantly changing and the police officer or NAG member on the ground is attempting to work within a sometimes confusing environment. Working in community safety can sometimes appear to the observer to be devoid of certainty and perhaps a little 'footloose' in the sense that many of the concepts that NAGs and officers work on are so difficult to tie down and success is so hard to measure. These problems are the focus of the discussions in this chapter and the following chapter (which focusses mainly on problem-solving).

In discussing the NAG as a partnership, it is proposed that the NAG be viewed using a 'nodal governance of security' analysis. This was discussed in chapter 2 and derives from the idea that it is best to analyze the complex world of fragmented security provision in late-modern society as a web of interconnected 'nodes' which can control or provide security in any of its different forms. As discussed above (chapter 2), a node can be considered to be one of two types. The *auspices* are those who legitimize the security provision, for example the state as a regulator of PSOs, and the *provider* or the body that actually does the work in order to provide the security on the ground (Crawford, 2006a). It seems clear that each agency that works together in the partnership agenda within which neighbourhood policing operates, is itself a provider of security product or commodity. That is, if one includes within the concept of 'security provision' such a wide variety of activities as those conducted by councils in providing lighting and planning 'defensible spaces' or private business in providing security guards, residents providing police and other agencies with information, or housing agencies in challenging anti-social residents. If it is accepted that the partnership agenda is the way to approach the co-production of community safety or crime reduction, then it is hard to argue that activities such as those mentioned, which would not traditionally have been seen as part of the production of security are clearly part of the contemporary security-production environment.

Mapping this environment is central to understanding how security is produced at present in order to understand how it might be (or optimistically, how it might best be) produced in the future and this work is an attempt to 'map' the operations of the partnership component of neighbourhood policing as a node of security governance.

As Wood and Shearing put it:

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges in crafting governance designs for the future will be the establishment of appropriately deliberative structures and processes that allow for competing normative objectives to be articulated, weighed and aligned and competing mechanisms to be given equal consideration. Before this design phase begins, however, we must get our 'maps' right of what currently exists, central to which is the acceptance that governance is indeed more than a two-actor play. (2007: 145)

Partnership working

Partnership working promises a lot. The discourse of partnership working is based on the idea that crime and anti-social behaviour are problems that cannot be resolved, mitigated or ameliorated by the police alone, but require the help of a wide variety of agencies and indeed the 'community' itself (Home Office, 1991, 2001). Yet how a partnership is constructed, for example, in terms of its legal, financial or support structure, or even the regularity of meetings or the relationships between agencies, can have a huge affect on the potential or actual success of a given partnership:

Achieving successful partnerships is by no means straightforward. There is a big gulf between the ideals of 'partnerships' and the reality of its practice. The term 'partnership' is often used to cover a multitude of sins. Discussion of partnerships generally fails to specify the nature of relations between the parties that is envisaged (Crawford and Matassa, 2000:102).

It is therefore important to be entirely clear about what type of partnership model is envisaged. This is discussed further in the next section which deals with how NAGs, as they operate in the neighbourhood policing context, compare with some of the ideal-types of community-safety partnerships. The ideal-types used are those that Crawford and Matassa (2000) divined when they conducted an international literature review of community-safety structures for the Criminal Justice Review Group in March 2000. The discussions in this chapter will refer to many of the typologies and classifications in that review. Although the work may be nine years old, the problems it highlights and the analytical approach it provides remain as relevant today as when first published. The review thus provides a useful set of analytical tools for setting the NAG and other partnership components of neighbourhood policing into context.

Partnership promises a lot, but like many political promises, it begs the question 'does it deliver?' Which itself begs the question, 'how would we know if we were delivering?' or 'how do we measure successful delivery?' The discussion here is focussed on the tensions as observed during this study and as described by some of the stakeholders who were interviewed. It is not meant to provide a systematic method for measuring how successful the partnerships have been, but to discuss some of the difficulties (and successes) that were observed and attempt to place them within the framework of existing theoretical analyses of partnership working, insofar as this is possible.

Partnership and 'Community'

If any node of security governance intends to work with a 'community' in order to provide or produce community safety, this co-operation will always contain some

form of philosophical underpinning, regardless of how unofficial or unenunciated that philosophy is. Each node which invokes the community as a partner does so for a specific purpose. It may be to create legitimacy for the node itself, or out of an altruistic commitment to ensuring that everyone within a community becomes safer or it may simply be because central government targets have obliged the node to work with the community and thus they are doing so. Each and every node will have its own collective understanding of what the philosophy behind invoking the notion of community is and within each node, each individual member (either individually or as a corporate entity, or indeed both) may have their own distinct understanding of what that philosophy is or should be. Divining what those different perspectives are is virtually impossible in that each individual involved in partnership working at any one node is likely to have a slightly different perspective to any other member of their own node, and probably more substantially different perspectives from those working within other nodes. So while individual agencies may have policy documents stating their perspectives on how a partnership should work, there is always substantial latitude on the ground for individual representatives or members of a node to work in their own way. This can provide individuals within a node the opportunity to make a substantial impact on the process of co-producing community safety in their neighbourhood.

There are a number of good examples of these differences in perspective that can be seen in the observations of the NAGs in the two case study neighbourhoods. In Neighbourhood A there was a substantial debate within the context of the NAG's response to bonfire night about who was to be responsible for the production of safety and security when it came to the problems of anti-social behaviour related to the

bonfires. One resident firmly felt that it was the job of the police and other authorities to ensure that things went off smoothly, while an agency representative was adamant that the responsibility lay with the community. This is a clear example of the inconsistent philosophical perspectives of members of the NAG as to what is the exact nature of the relationship when agencies are working in partnership with the community. Government White Papers regularly talk about involving the community in its own co-production of its own security (see notably 'Building Communities, Beating Crime', Home Office, 2001) but this raises substantial questions about the nature of the state and its role in producing security for its citizens. One of the central features of the nation-state as we have known it since the Treaty of Westphalia was signed in 1648 is that it provides (or at least strives to provide) security, both external military security and internal personal security to its citizens and its economic interests. In return for this security, the nation state expects some form of loyalty or commitment from the citizenry and an acceptance that the use of force is to be reserved to the nation-state to apply externally (militarily) and internally through prescribed agents of the state, most notably for the purposes of this research, the police (although including others such as prison officers and general citizens under certain circumstances).

This is a simplified interpretation of how the relationship works. However it is useful in this analysis because it allows us to see, at the level of a small neighbourhood-focussed node of security governance, that there is a clear articulation on the part of agents of the state that the responsibility for security lies with the citizen not the state. This 'responsibilization' discourse (discussed above in chapter 1) is part of an implicit admission that the state as we now know it cannot protect its citizens using its

traditional powers, such as the reserved use of force (ie policing) or the containment and punishment of its non-conforming citizens (or other people present in the state). If citizens must be called upon to provide their own security, this must be because the methods which are used by the state on its own are clearly insufficient to produce that security. The question then is; 'who is responsible for the production of security?' Is it the state as a Hobbesian *Leviathan*, or the individual as an economic, social and political actor in a constantly shifting, competitive and globalized world? Or is it the 'community' as a grouping of people or interests best positioned to enable the creation of its own security, tailored to best suit its needs? This is not a question that is easily answered. It is clear that the mere fact that it needs to be asked suggests that the previous models of centrally controlled methods of applying force and punishment to induce conformity are no longer (implicitly at least) considered sufficient.

The most interesting debate in this context at the NAG at Neighbourhood B was about a more fundamental or definitional issue. Although it too clearly symbolized the lack of coherent conceptualization of what is the philosophy behind a community/agency partnership. It focussed on the classic question of 'what is a community'. Some members of the NAG were unsure why they should be concerned about the interests of those who did not live in the neighbourhood but only came into it for temporary and largely economic reasons (eg to work or shop). However the facilitator from the community safety partnership was adamant that they were indeed part of the 'community' of Neighbourhood B. The argument put forth was clearly persuasive as the members of the NAG appeared to be completely satisfied that in fact such temporary visitors to the neighbourhood were indeed stakeholders in the community, with a view that should be considered. This discussion, while short, is illustrative of

the variety of perspectives that individuals working in partnership can have on the question of 'partnership' and 'community'. While the debate in Neighbourhood A goes to the heart of great debates on the nature of the state and the role of social policy, it does so on a very local level. The discussion in Neighbourhood B demonstrates that there can be substantial differences in perspective as to who is to be included in the notion of community.

Both discussions demonstrate, on different levels, the struggle within partnerships to find a pragmatic working understanding of terms which are slippery and hard to tie down. To work within the node effectively, partners need to have ideas about the meanings of terms which are broadly congruent with one another. Regardless of how 'practical' one considers their approach to the co-production of community safety, at some point there must be at least a form of philosophical or at least thought-out reasoning for what the node is attempting to do and how it will attempt to do it. This need not invoke grand theories or philosophy, but there has to be some sort of reasoning behind an intervention and an understanding of a problem or the definition of a NAG's security 'goals'.

The Spectrum of Ideal-Types of Partnership Working

Each individual node of security governance, including any NAG, that operates as a venue for collaborative working will have its own sets of resources, problems, opportunities and connections. Even within a BCU each NAG might have different problems to work on and a set of members with varying levels of commitment and know-how which can be utilized to construct effective partnership work on those problems. Crawford and Matassa (2000: 102) have found seven models of

partnership. Five are based on the typology of partnership in the Morgan Report (Home Office, 1991), one is based on academic commentary and the seventh comes from their own review of the community-safety structures in place in other jurisdictions, notably New Zealand. The seven models are:

- The ‘independent’ model, with an independent co-ordinator;
- The ‘local authority based’ model;
- The ‘police centred local’ model;
- The ‘police centred headquarters’ model;
- The ‘indeterminate’ model, with no clear leader, co-ordinator or strategy;
- The ‘corporate’ model, with no lead agency;
- The ‘sponsored, corporate’ model.

The last model perhaps applies in the case of the *Crime and Disorder Act*’s application in that CDRPs are at least formed by a collective group of agencies, particularly in initiating the partnerships (Crawford and Matassa, 2000: 102). It is clear that a NAG could be described as fitting into a number of different models of partnership as outlined above. In its initiation it is clearly a police-centred model, which perhaps aspires to be a ‘police-centred local’ model in operation, but was certainly ‘police centred headquarters’ model in its initial implementation. Yet NAGs also bring about the involvement of local authorities, especially for some NAGs starting out, they can appear to have no clear leader, co-ordinator or strategy (ie the ‘indeterminate’ model). Although it is clear that no member of such a NAG would consider themselves as aspiring to such a lack of direction. It is thus argued here that

the NAG as a partnership organization best conforms to the notion of a 'police centred local' model of partnership working.

The evidence gathered for this thesis suggests that the police are the central agency behind the NAG and that the NAG is a fundamental part of the business of neighbourhood policing. While all of these models come from HQ, or perhaps more strictly, from central government itself, each NAG has a substantial amount of latitude in how it operates. The problems are determined at local level and the NAG is supposed to operate as a node of security governance in its own right by trying to apply the working skills and resources that are brought to the table by NAG members to try and achieve results in the local neighbourhood. However having argued that the NAG is best seen as a 'police centred local' model of partnership working, it is also possible that the partners themselves or even the police might disagree with such a classification.

Yet it is clear from Crawford and Matassa's discussions and indeed from this research, that what a partnership node aspires to be and what it actually is on the ground are not necessarily the same thing;

[T]he claims of partnership often hide a very different reality (Crawford, 1997; HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, 1998; Audit Commission, 1999).

Many existing partnerships are better described as 'talking shops' or 'paper partnerships' which exist merely for the purposes of satisfying funding requirements. In constructing genuine partnerships, local

strategies need to avoid becoming paper exercises which simply re-label existing activity as community safety. (2000: 103)

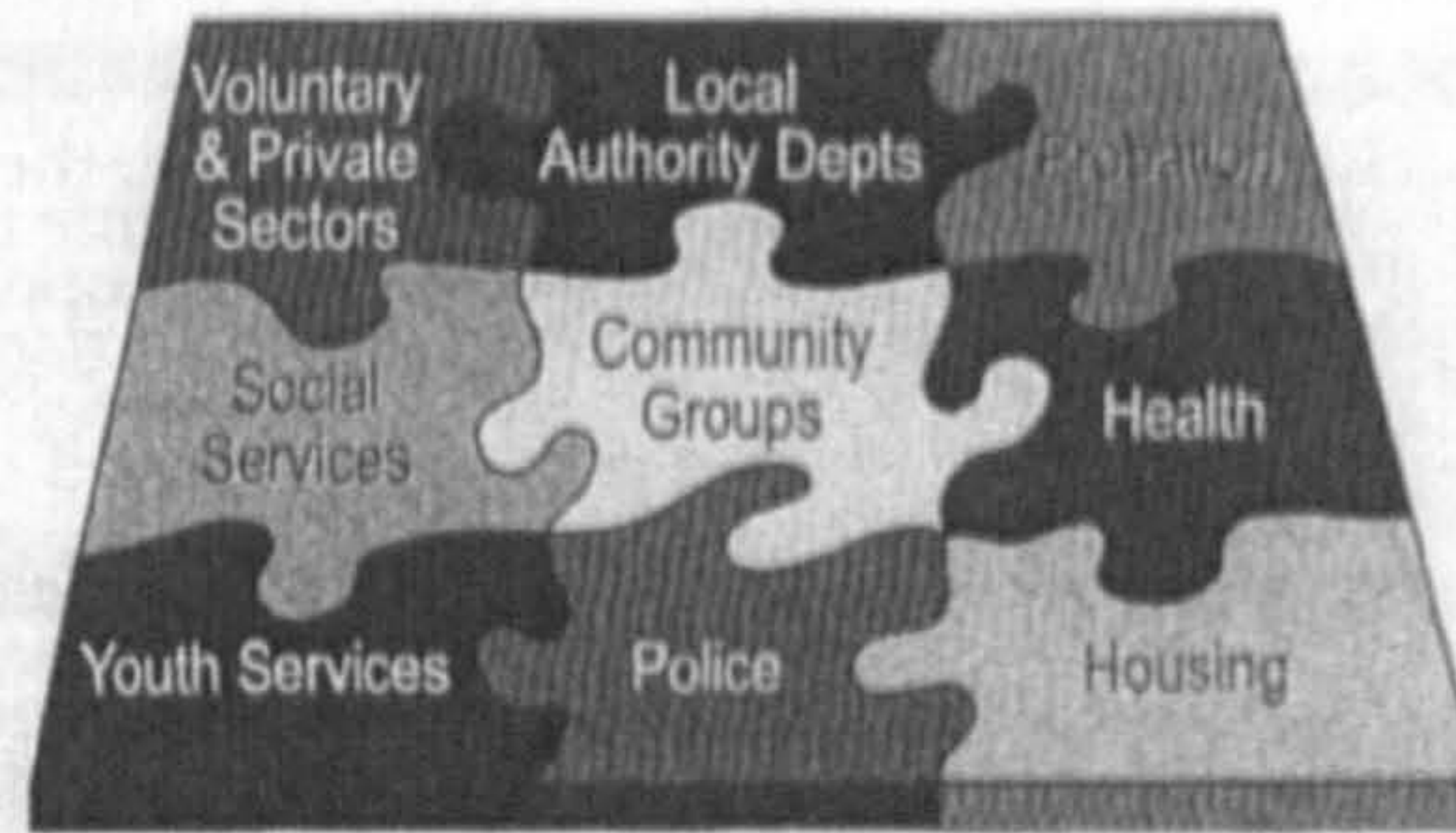
This risk of becoming a paper-exercise or 'talking shop' was taken seriously in the NAGs studied. In fact, the chair of the NAG in Neighbourhood A was noted repeatedly cutting off conversations that were not directly related to the problems at hand and reminding attendees (and particularly residents) that the NAG was 'not a talking shop'. However, the success of a NAG in avoiding these pitfalls depends to a large degree on how well managed it is, both by the members themselves, their chair and the support agencies and facilitators who assist it. In Neighbourhood B for example, a number of members (again residents) resigned for the specific reason that they felt nothing was being done at all and the entire operation was, according to their resignation letter, 'all talk and no action'.

Above the conceptual level of the models, Crawford (1998) sets out two 'ideal types' of partnership working which form the opposing ends of a continuum. These he entitles '*multi-agency*' partnerships and '*inter-agency*' partnerships. The former representing simple partnerships and the latter embodying 'ever-greater levels of collaboration'. It is clear that virtually all partnerships operate somewhere between the two. Crawford and Matassa suggest that neither is inherently better than the other (2000: 103-104). Hughes, argues that '[t]he challenge now for such partnership workings may be to move from being multi-agency in character to becoming genuinely 'inter-agency' in orientation, reflecting an expanded notion of community safety as addressing a range of social harms' (2006b: 83).

On the face of it, the temptations to aspire towards an inter-agency approach are substantial. If partnership truly moves from 'multi-agency co-operation' to 'inter-agency collaboration' there is the potential for a substantial change (or indeed reform) of how public services as they relate to the provision of community safety are provided. Crawford and Matassa provide a sketch figure of the two types of partnership as one might conceive of them visually (Fig 6.1). It is clear that the inter-agency approach is considered to be substantially more dynamic in both its operations and outcomes. This sort of collaboration is what it seems police officers and other agencies mean when they speak of the application of 'joined-up thinking', an oft-repeated phrase amongst the police officers spoken to in this research. However, on the other hand there is a risk with greater collaboration that individual agencies will come into greater, and more intractable conflict by conducting inter-agency operations (2000: 104).

Two Ideal Types of Partnerships

Multi-Agency Partnerships – Co-operation



Inter-Agency Partnerships – Collaboration



Figure 6.1: Inter-agency versus multi-agency partnerships

Notwithstanding the potential for such inter-agency collaboration, the operation of neighbourhood policing in the neighbourhoods studied fell firmly into the category of 'multi-agency partnership'. The discourse about partnership never once mentioned the notion of 'inter-agency' working or the potential benefits of such collaborations. Yet at times there were discussions about difficulties in getting agencies to work together or fulfil the commitments they had made at a NAG (consider the problems of getting an agency to provide signs about the problems of garages in Neighbourhood A). It appears from this research that NAGs and the partnership process in neighbourhood policing are built on a 'police-centred local' model and firmly fall into the category of 'multi-agency partnerships'. It is hard to see how neighbourhood policing with its present structures, could move towards a truly inter-agency collaborative approach without something of a seachange in the operation of local government. It is also

difficult to predict if such a reform would pay off in terms of increasing community safety. Finally, it is also interesting to consider if such a change is desirable given the very real risks (discussed below) of criminalizing social policy.

Problems of Different Motivations

Perhaps a substantial obstacle in the way of moving towards greater inter-agency collaboration is the simple fact that a plurality of agencies will inevitably have at least an equal number of different agendas. Unless all agencies are to sit at the table and, somewhat meaninglessly, say ‘all our agendas are the same; we want what is good for people and society’, or some similarly vague aspiration, then they would be denying the essential differences in their skills, resources and approaches which makes them useful contributors. Differences in motivations and *modi operandi* are essential to partnership working. After all, if all agencies aimed for the same thing and worked the same way, why have more than one? Yet it is posited here that despite this potential for different contributions, this difference is also a great challenge to partnership working.

In the context of neighbourhood policing the police are involved in partnership working through NAGs because it is the central core of what their corporate agenda has become in recent years (Clarke *et al.*, 2007: 55-59). It is from the police that the motivation and drive to initiate the partnership process of neighbourhood policing has come, although stepping back, it could be argued that the motivation comes from central government. Other agencies have come on board more slowly and their apparent reluctance is a useful indicator of the differences in motivations between the police and partners. As one senior officer put it:

It would be fair to say that it started with the direction to conduct neighbourhood policing was initially given to the police. So initially the police started doing it. To engage partners then wasn't particularly difficult, because most of them existed. But there was a reluctance to get involved. As the various edicts of central government required partners involvement as well, it's become better, but there has been a real, voyage of discovery, in the different working methods of all the various organizations (Senior police officer, Thames Valley Police Headquarters).

This perhaps shows that initially most partners were becoming involved in neighbourhood policing because of central government directives to work together rather than through a decision on their own part that their own corporate objectives were best achieved through participation in such partnerships. This is understandable given the pressure on resources that are faced by all agencies attempting to provide public services. All agencies are, or at least consider themselves to be, under-resourced and this can have a substantial impact on how motivated they are to conduct the work of consultation and attending NAGs. This was identified by one agency representative as perhaps one of the key problems:

I would say that all the partners are committed but inevitably there are some resourcing issues I think from all the key agencies, the police, the parishes and [the] Council are trying to identify ways to overcome that. Inevitably from the police point of view, one of the issues is the regular turnover of staff, particularly PCSOs that are then moving on to join the

regulars etc. So it's always a resourcing issue about how to plug and backfill those posts. I don't think there is any doubt that all the key agencies are committed. Similarly with [the] Council going through a process to identify a key dedicated officer to support each NAG to overcome those resourcing issues.

The resources required to attend and support partnership meetings (notably the thirty-two NAGs in the BCU) place substantial strain on partner agencies and clearly make it difficult for them to commit fully to the process. This was evidenced in the poor attendance of some agencies in both case study neighbourhoods, for example the difficulties experienced in getting a representative of the Council's housing department to attend the NAG at Neighbourhood A and the similar problems of getting a representative of the private housing authority to attend the NAG at Neighbourhood B.

The example of the private housing authority raises an important point about differences in motivation, which are particularly acute in the case of the private, profit-making corporate body, such as local businesses and private housing authorities. Private housing authorities are, in many cases, profit-making entities who create financial surpluses by providing a public service on behalf of the government who have devolved the power to do so to the body. Like all corporations, their central aim is the production of profit (Bakan, 2005). However, they remain legally a public body for the purposes of judicial review (Manning, 2004) and for review of their operations under the *Human Rights Act 1998* (Wadham *et al.*, 2007: 74). Yet it is easy for such private bodies, whose central aim is to make a profit, to focus more on this

aim than the provision of adequate public services. Parallels can be drawn in the criminal justice system with the difficulties in terms of accountability surrounding private provision of prison (Cavadino and Dignan, 2002: 249) and security patrols (Button, 2007). What is clear in all these examples, is that there can be conflicting motivations.

These conflicting motivations are even more acutely visible in the case of corporate entities which are not legally accountable as public bodies with public functions, but which have a substantial impact on the possibilities for producing community safety. The two classic examples, seen clearly in this research are of course the pub landlord and the large national supermarket chain. In one NAG that was observed (although not a case study NAG) there were serious problems getting a local pub landlord to attend, despite the attendance of PCSOs at the pub inviting the landlord to attend. Similarly, in Neighbourhood B, there was substantial difficulty getting a representative of a large national supermarket chain, which had a small franchise in Gamma Town, to attend. This difficulty is perhaps a teething problem and an agency representative who was interviewed pointed out that some NAGs, albeit after the fieldwork for this research was carried out, have made progress with the chain and this has led to other NAGs beginning to gain access to the chain and convincing it to send representatives to the meeting. The supermarket chain's franchise in Neighbourhood B was repeatedly identified as a site of anti-social behaviour both in the NAG's 'board-blasts' and in the initial consultation phase when stickers were placed on a map of Neighbourhood B at the public meeting. However, as Button (2007) observed in his research on PSOs in a large shopping mall, reducing anti-social behaviour (or increasing security generally) is only a concern of commercial

enterprises while it is increasing profits or in some way adding to that profit-making process. Convincing a corporation to become involved in partnership work on community safety by sending representatives to NAGs (at tangible cost to the corporation) will only be possible while it can be shown that this is worthwhile to the corporation in terms of financial advantage, or at the very least has tangible payoff in terms of goodwill. Initiating, and sustaining these relationships through difficult times may prove challenging for partnership working.

Corporations, like many of the partners in neighbourhood policing are motivated by commitments to other areas of social policy or profit-making. Understanding these differences is key to understanding how to obtain the co-operation of partner agencies in the neighbourhood policing process. However it has to be remembered that partners have different roles to play in society and it is something of a risk to become completely obsessed with their efforts on the issue of community safety over their other tasks.

The Criminalization and 'ASB-icization' of Social Policy and 'Youth'

As has just been discussed, many partners have an important role to play in the provision of social (and private) services to a wide section of society. There is however, a real concern that the focus on crime prevention or community safety could become all pervasive in the area of providing social services at the expense of other equally, or perhaps more, important and legitimate concerns in the field of social policy such as poverty prevention, reduction of social exclusion or the provision of high standards of health, housing and education. As Crawford and Matassa put it:

A potential consequence of according to crime a central place in the construction of social order, is that fundamental public issues may become marginalised, except in so far as they are defined in terms of their crimogenic qualities. The danger is that, as a consequence, we may come to view poor housing, unemployment, poor schooling, the lack of youth leisure opportunities, and so on, as no longer important public issues in themselves. Rather, their importance may become increasingly seen to derive from the belief that they lead to crime and disorder. The fact that they may do so is no reason not to assert their importance in their own right. After all, there are other things which are more important than crime prevention. (2000: 96)

There are other ways of viewing the problems of contemporary society which do not need to be so crime-focussed. For example, one could take a 'harm-centred' (Tifft, 1995) or 'zemiological' approach to the work of agencies in social policy (Hillyard, 2005). It is clear that the work of partner agencies beyond the field of community safety makes an equal, or arguably greater, contribution to human well-being than one that is constrained within the relatively narrow concepts of 'crime' and 'anti-social behaviour'. Alternatively one could consider the question of whether there can be 'enough' crime, or 'too much' crime control. This point, and indeed the point that there may be social policy aspirations greater than crime prevention, is echoed by the writings of Durkheim (1895 [1996]: 49; see also Morrison, 1997: 57) who argued that there was a 'normal' amount of crime which a society must accept as part of its proper functioning. If crime is such a fluid, contested and difficult to quantify concept (see discussion in chapters 1 and 2), how useful is it to become obsessed with crime as the

central focus around which to build a late-modern pluralist society? The notion of undefined 'anti-social behaviour' (see chapter 2) is an example of the widening net of social control (Cohen, 1979) where such a potentially broad use of the concept of 'crime' to label almost any social problem has made anti-social behaviour one of the buzz-words of contemporary discourse. Anti-social behaviour thus becomes a notion that allows former 'crime control agencies' such as the police to become involved in broader social policy issues such as litter, and in parallel allows agencies traditionally not involved in social control, for example housing authorities, to become central to the control agenda in issuing threats of eviction to anti-social tenants. It seems that the anxieties expressed by Crawford and Matassa may be justified in that the focus on reducing crime and anti-social behaviour are affecting the implementation of other social policy concerns.

A useful example is the problem of the garages in Neighbourhood B. The NAG is putting pressure on the council's housing department to remove 'void' garages and put up signs to make residents aware of the problem, yet the housing department is not attending the meetings and the council are slow to provide signs. They clearly, as discussed above, have their own motivations in working on the garages (resources, revenue stream from the garages, other concerns within their department) and their own view of how to best discharge their public duty to provide and maintain housing within their district. Why should a NAG be able to influence them to alter their view of how their service should be provided, solely because the NAG's concern is anti-social behaviour? Why should there be an ASB-icization of the council's work in providing an essential, and difficult to facilitate, social service such as housing? This question goes to the heart of the discussion above on the difference between *multi-*

and *inter*-agency partnership working. While it seems wonderful to aspire to collaboration of an inter-agency nature, with increased synergies and coherencies in responses and strategies, it is clear from the contexts of these discussions (the instant thesis on neighbourhood policing, and a government commissioned literature review on community safety), that this discussion is itself risking making the very mistakes which it is criticising. The evidence from this research suggests that the aspiration to increase collaboration is in the context of the 'struggle' with crime and anti-social behaviour and that the synergies are to assist in that struggle rather than concern the collaborative effort with the aims and aspirations of those agencies and their contributions to social policy. There can be no doubt that a police-centred partnership model risks criminalizing or ASB-icizing social policy.

The police are, after all the lead players in the operation and instigation of NAGs and (at the risk of stating the obvious) neighbourhood policing itself. Other partners, as has been observed in this chapter, have been slower to come to the table and become involved in the project. It is simply not obvious what are the benefits to them of involvement in the partnership process. While there is some 'bigger picture' or longer-term thinking involved in the problem-solving process (discussed below, chapter 7), there is a consistent search for 'quick wins' which are expected to be facilitated by partners in order to make an impression on local residents and stakeholders, to increase the NAG's reputation and help draw in other partners to the process. Focussing agency resources on crime and anti-social behaviour to bolster the image of the NAG is a good example of 'the creeping criminalisation of social policy that community safety may herald' (Crawford and Matassa, 2000: 96).

Parallel with the risk of criminalizing social policy is the equally grave risk of criminalizing or ASB-icizing 'youth' or 'young people'. This was clearly apparent in the two case-study neighbourhoods in this research. The consultation process in Neighbourhood B is a good example of 'young people hanging around' being determined as a problem by local residents, who in the next breath admitted that they were not in fact doing anything wrong. These young people were merely socializing together in a public location, yet there is the risk of casting them as a problem or a risk of anti-social behaviour, when there is no evidence that they are doing anything wrong. When it came to the problem-solving process in Neighbourhood B, the neighbourhood police officer pointed out that anti-social behaviour decreased when the weather was bad, so to solve or ameliorate the priority problems in the neighbourhood, the best thing the NAG could do was 'pray for rain'. In Neighbourhood A a similar youth-focussed argument was made for how to solve the problem of anti-social behaviour. The NAG's chair spoke at some length about the fact that if children were sitting in front of computer screens at the youth club or the local drop in centre anti-social behaviour would decrease. Thus the best way to reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour caused by young people playing outside during the summer was to increase the opening hours and capacity of these centres so that young people could spend more time on computers.

This is a disturbing description of how to manage young people as they navigate some of the trickiest parts of their lives. Instead of engaging them it is suggested that it is best to corral them into computer rooms to be entertained by and interact with software so as to reduce the problems they cause to adults. Blaming young people for all the crime and anti-social behaviour and problematizing their existence, not only

risks increasing the scale of the problem (for example by 'labelling' young people criminal, they may act up to the role), but also avoids the uncomfortable reality that it is they who are in fact most vulnerable and in need of society's support. 'Othering' them in order to create the normal order of the law-abiding, productive adult is not the way to resolve such problems, no matter how many computer screens the NAG can gain access to.

Tension Between Central Government Targets and Local Priorities

One of the great conflicts in the movement towards a community-policing, neighbourhood policing or citizen-focused local policing model, is that it is instigated by those in central government (in a UK context, but it could just as easily be instigated at the level of a state or regional government in another political context) and has to be implemented by officers at a local level. The interests of the two are not necessarily the same. As Neyroud puts it, 'this dichotomy between central targets and local engagement sits at the heart of the dilemma for police managers wrestling with the agendas set out in successive consultation papers' (2007: 215).

Surprisingly, this tension does not appear to be as much of a problem for the other agencies who are involved in neighbourhood policing. As one agency representative said:

The particular agency where that has been a problem has been the police because there obviously are national targets that say 'sanctioned detections' and, you know, 'you've got to hit this target', but priority is beginning to take place. Again this is also about how their internal

understanding fits within that. The police have now put into place abstraction policies which are beginning to take effect. Whereas before the core reactive teams might have been pulling people out of neighbourhoods to cover this, then obviously that was going to have an impact on the service at a local level. I don't think that the NAGs necessarily have seen it. All they've seen is, well you know, 'that police officer's not been there'. They've not really understood *at the NAG* what the issue was. Whereas obviously the agencies, that's where it's impacted. I think that's been a major issue within the police but not necessarily had an effect with the other agencies around the table. The problem with local government has probably been political influence. But that's more been about tensions amongst people's own objectives and egos rather than what was happening (emphasis added).

This is an interesting observation because not only does it get to the heart of the conflict between the central governmental aspirations for the neighbourhood policing policy, but it also directly connects the conflict to the ideological conflict between the 'response' and 'community' police officer or 'hard' versus 'soft' policing. This is a divide that co-incides with Kelling and Moore's (1988) notions of the phases of policing moving from 'reform era' or professionalized policing to 'community problem-solving era' policing. In the former 'era' the police officer was monitored to ensure fast response times and other quantifiable targets were being met efficiently. In the latter, the police officer attempts to connect to the community, and provide a bespoke service fitting to their security needs. What the current model of neighbourhood policing requires is that the police provide both types of service and

this is an obvious locus of tension as demands increase or decrease on each section. It is clear that central efforts to strictly control or 'managerialize' policing cannot allow for the freedom of decision-making required of an officer committed to long term community-connection, relationship-building and problem-solving. One officer who was interviewed was seconded to the National Policing Improvement Agency. She flagged up the same problem of a commitment to quantitative evaluation, whereby the police remain wedded to central targets around detection, when neighbourhood targets need to be evaluated by some other means:

ACPO leads and BCU commanders are currently held to account for their sanctioned detection rates in terms of crime detections. And we really need to get to a point, and I think it's coming, certainly from government, in terms of some indicators around confidence and satisfaction. So until BCU commanders are held to account for that locally, you know, they tend to concentrate on what's measured. ... [S]ome of the BCU commanders we speak to, when they go up to their performance meetings, they don't get asked, 'how many neighbourhood priorities have you solved this month?' They get asked 'what's your sanctioned detection rate?' and 'why is it this?' or 'why is it that?'.

This, she argued could be considered in terms of a need for a change in police culture, something that policing academics have been debating for some years (Chan, 1996, 1997; Waddington, 1999).

It's a bit of a cultural change there. And that is required before that gets filtered down to a neighbourhood officer level. Sometimes, you ask them 'what's your priorities?' and they still think it's around sanctioned detections, which it's not. You know, it needs to be very much more around the sort of qualitative stuff as opposed to the quantitative stuff.

Moving to this sort of qualitative evaluation is exceptionally difficult for the police, and indeed for many agencies in public service (Clarke *et al.*, 2007). It demands a fundamental re-think of what is 'success', which, as has been discussed throughout this work, is a difficult and inherently political debate in itself.

As well as the problem of quantitative central targets overwhelming qualitative neighbourhood objectives, they also cause substantial problems in the construction of solid and stable police-neighbourhood relationships. This is particularly evident with the abstraction of officers from neighbourhood duties to response duties. If there is to be any chance of a neighbourhood police officer making progress on connecting with the stakeholders in his neighbourhood, which may be as big as 6,000 people (plus short term visitors), it is only going to be through repeatedly meeting people and re-inforcing the notion that they know the area and are committed to it. This is a very real problem and one that was observed in both Neighbourhoods A and B where three different neighbourhood officers were rotated through the former neighbourhood and two through the latter in the course of the research. While there is no implication that these officers were not committed to their neighbourhood work, the fact that they were transferred without even working for a year makes it difficult for them to be able to

fully get to grips with a neighbourhood, its politics (both small and large 'P'), dynamics and perhaps even its geography.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the concept of 'nodal governance of security' is a useful way to view the operation of neighbourhood policing. This is particularly the case if the NAG is considered to be a node of security governance, which interacts with other nodes in a greater 'security quilt'. The node interacts with other nodes through, for example, the implementation of agreed actions by partner agencies who are in attendance, or by lobbying stakeholders or other resource controllers to act in a way that impacts on the outcome which favours the NAG's objectives, or efforts to solve priority problems. In discussing this work, it is just as important to consider the nature of the internal operations of the NAG as it is to consider its interaction with other nodes. These internal interactions are not always clear. Partner agencies often operate towards different goals, by different means and with different timetables. These differences have to be considered carefully when analysing the operation of a node.

There are other problems with partnership working in neighbourhood policing. There is a real risk that by operating in a partnership arrangement which focusses on crime reduction, that the aims of other providers of social services will become focussed on reducing crime, rather than the provision of valuable and useful social services for their own sake. This criminalization of social policy risks viewing all social service provision as a part of the fight against crime and may in fact hinder the development of effective provision of other services. The problem of viewing 'problems' as

criminal is also evident in the way 'youth' and young people are often perceived to be a criminal problem, something to be dealt with by a policing or NAG intervention. It is clear that partnership agencies need to avoid the pitfalls of 'criminalizing' things that are not best dealt with by notions of criminal justice.

Another problem is the tension between the desired central government control over the process, which manifests itself in targets, guidelines and standards, and the overarching aim of neighbourhood policing that it should provide a local policing service to suit local conditions and local demands. How does a police manager juggle the competing demands on police resources? Interestingly, it appears from this research that, although some partner agencies may have been obliged to initially enter partnership working due to edicts from central government, it is the police who suffer most from this conflict between national targets and local demands.

Chapter 7

The Relationship Between Neighbourhood Action Groups, Neighbourhood Policing, Problem-oriented Policing and Intelligence- led Policing

‘[P]roblem-oriented policing is a state of mind, and not a program, technique or procedure’ (Eck and Spelman, 1988).

One of the aims of the NAG as a node of security governance is that it will attempt to reduce the recurrence of perennial problems of a type that is often described as criminal activity or anti-social behaviour. In order to achieve this, a NAG uses the Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment (or SARA) approach and the skills at its disposal to try to eliminate components of the Problem Analysis Triangle (PAT), that is to say, remove a problem victim, location or offender from contact with the other two, and thus eliminate the problem. This problem-oriented policing (POP) will, it is hoped, reduce the problems before they manifest themselves as incidents which demand police or other agency intervention. POP in many ways aspires to be a useful approach to policing because ‘a stitch in time, saves nine’ and thus solving problems reduces the drain on police resources which attaches to repeated call outs for the same problem (Goldstein, 1979). The theory behind these approaches (POP, ILP, SARA and PAT) have been discussed above (chapters 2 and 5) and it is not intended to return in depth to those debates here, instead this chapter discusses some of the practical issues and difficulties with applying POP and ILP techniques in neighbourhood policing, particularly by NAGs.

A parallel aim of neighbourhood policing is that it should have a role in producing information which may in time become 'intelligence' to assist the police in conducting intelligence-led policing operations (Association of Chief Police Officers, 2006: section 4). This, it is hoped, would be achieved by building trust in the community or neighbourhood, which allowed members of that community to feel that they could engage with the police in providing information which may be of use to them. This trust could perhaps be built by solving a perennial problem in a neighbourhood and showing a community that the police were serious about their problems. Alternately it could be merely by trying to increase visibility and accessibility in the hope that the reassurance produced by such action would enable those with useful information to come forward. Both ILP and POP are interconnected and neighbourhood policing is intended to involve aspects of both approaches (see discussion in chapter 1). One senior police officer at the TVP explained how the ILP and POP approach are intricately bound up in the process of neighbourhood policing when each neighbourhood is rolled out:

I actually check to make sure that all the neighbourhoods have got three things in place before I sort of give them the green light to go ahead. In neighbourhood policing that means they have got to have dedicated resources onto the neighbourhood, they've got to work jointly with their partners and problem-solving and be actually intelligence-led.

It is clear from this that from the police manager's perspective the two approaches are bound up in the practice of neighbourhood policing. In this chapter each approach is discussed with regard to the implementation of neighbourhood policing generally, but

particularly with regard to their relationship with the Neighbourhood Action Group. The NAGs visited in the process of this research relied heavily on a traditional POP approach, but also fed information up into the intelligence hierarchy, and thus had at least some connection with ILP. However, the role of the NAGs observed in this study was focussed more on solving neighbourhood problems and only peripherally in gathering information to feed intelligence-led policing and as a result this chapter will focus more on POP than ILP.

Neighbourhood Action Groups and Problem-Oriented Policing

As discussed in chapters 4 and 5, the NAGs studied in this research conducted problem oriented policing using the traditional SARA method. This section will discuss some of the different perceptions of that process between the police managers on the one hand and the experience on the ground on the other. It will then discuss the problems with the problem-solving process as encountered at the two case-study NAGs.

Police managers are eager to follow the SARA process and seemed keen that it should be used in practice in the NAGs themselves. The SARA process, according to one police manager interviewed, is 'a tried and tested method'. This particular manager felt that the process of compiling Neighbourhood Priority Profiles in order to move smoothly through the SARA process was a helpful way for officers on the ground, and their partners, to apply the methodology. However, some officers working at a neighbourhood level were not interested in it because they found it too bureaucratic;

So they more or less basically tend not to fill it out. But if they did fill it out ... But if you actually follow the form through, it actually leads you through the process. You've got to do your scanning before you move on to your analysis and do your analysis before you move on to response. The process is there. It's just actually giving the officers the training in the process to actually deliver on the model.

Other managers who were interviewed agreed that the model was valuable when they came to discussing the process of finding out what the actual 'facts on the ground' were. This occurred when the problems raised in community or neighbourhood consultations were actually put to the test. The example given is of a problem that was written off by explaining to neighbourhood residents and stakeholders what the nature of the problem actually was. Thus it was an exercise in managing perceptions.

Well actually, when the initial scanning was done, on a more accurate than anecdotal basis, we discovered that actually there wasn't speeding. What the problem was, was people driving at twenty-eight miles an hour, loudly. So actually there's a need to tell people that the speed of that vehicle was actually twenty-eight miles an hour, not forty-two. So the problem then became, perception of speed, which was addressed through a variety of measures.

As was discussed in chapter 2, one of the great difficulties attached to POP is that defining problems can be so difficult. Defining crime itself is the subject of huge and ongoing debate (Simester and Sullivan, 2007), while the notion of anti-social

behaviour is under constant scrutiny (Case, 2007; Liberty, 2007; Morgan and Newburn, 2007). So when a group within a neighbourhood is in the position to raise an issue of crime or anti-social behaviour, such a complaint has to be properly 'scanned' or assessed before a response can be decided upon. In the speeding case, operating an intervention to solve the problem would have in fact been a great waste of resources because there was in fact no such problem, other than a perception of a problem.

This perception of a crime taking place and a demand for the police to do something about it is interesting. It is in effect a demand on the police to do something about how people perceive crime in their area rather than actually to control the activity labelled 'criminal' by the residents (although not the criminal law). The greater local engagement which the police conduct, the greater the risk of putting in place interventions which may act not to impede crime or anti-social behaviour, but merely to impede perfectly legal activities. In cases such as the example of speeding given above, the police – when acting as the 'catch-all social service' – are being asked to deal with problems which simply do not exist, or exist merely within the perception of an individual or group of individuals, based on a misconception of what is actually happening.

Of course, in the post- or late-modern world, the concept of 'actually happening' or any other form of 'reality' is hotly contested (Milovanovic, 2001). The speeding example is one in which some sort of objective analysis can be applied to how 'bad' the problem is. This is unlike the problem of any form of anti-social behaviour which is only a problem if there is a person present to feel 'harassment, alarm or distress',

which is far more open to interpretation. No commentators that I am aware of are seriously contesting that the police's measurement of vehicle speed as a method of establishing if there is a speeding problem, is in some way subjective. Thus, when it comes to traffic problems, it seems that the police can actually use the scanning process to decide if there is a problem worth intervening. If there is not a speeding problem, as in this case, their answer is to attempt to educate those who have the grievance about the extent of the 'problem-activity' and why it was that the police were not in a position to intervene in it. While such an exercise in 'winning hearts and minds' may seem to be completely different to response policing, in fact it can be read as merely another facet of it. That is to say that in the speeding example, as in the example of almost any 'traditional' or 'fire-brigade' policing, the police officer is resolving a conflict, in this case, between the driver and the resident. As in any other case of police intervention, there is no guarantee that the resident (who is essentially the 'loser' in the conflict) will be pleased with or even accepting of the outcome.

This conflict resolution role is at the core of what it is that the public police do, whether this is by breaking up fights or by assuaging the concerns of the resident about the motorist who is driving loudly. Applying the techniques of problem-oriented policing can thus be seen as an extension of that conflict resolution role, or at least a different strategy for approaching conflict in the social world.

The Attraction of SARA: Controlling Local Police Discretion and Demand Management

While the problem of 'speeding' outlined above may be relatively easy to quantify or 'scan', serious challenges remain for problems that are less mechanically quantifiable

than breaches of traffic regulations. While managers may prefer to see officers and NAGs on the ground implementing a strict SARA approach because it appears to be an entirely rigorous activity, built as it is within a step by step methodological framework, it is important to note that each and every step risks the imposition of individual prejudices or preferences. To the police manager SARA provides a way to reduce the discretion of the lower ranking neighbourhood police officer, by hemming them in with bureaucratic targets. Thus it can be a tool in controlling how the police manager achieves their service or responsiveness goals. The SARA approach, while attempting to force those on the ground to take a scrupulous approach to a problem, does not look at the actual steps that occurred in defining that problem as something to which the SARA process can be applied. So while scanning may 'no-crime' a problem, it says little about the politics of the social construction of a problem. Similarly it cannot predict if the problem's eradication is a worthwhile use of police time, or a worthwhile end in itself. Take for example the question of parking in Omega Town in Neighbourhood B. This problem was a particular issue for one individual resident, although it was not selected by the police and community safety officials as the right problem for the NAG to analyse. However, in a world of infinite police resources, there is no reason that the SARA technique could not be applied to the parking problem. SARA cannot help define the problems which a NAG or police force attempts to tackle, in essence it can only process them. However, occasionally at the scanning phase SARA will discover the 'problem' is not in fact a 'problem'. For example residents complained in Neighbourhood B of drug taking being a problem, however, at the scanning stage, the NAG found that there was not a big problem of drug taking in the neighbourhood.

One of the attractions of the SARA model it appears, is that it is a formal structure which police managers can use to direct the rank and file police officer in their operations. It has been said that the police is an unusual organization because the real power of the police force resides in the discretion of the most junior members of the force. They are the ones who make the most crucial decisions, the decisions which get closest to the use of force. That is to say, following the analysis of Bittner (1990), if the police are distinguished as an entity in society by their legal capacity to use force, and it is the decision to do so or not to which is at the core of every 'coal-face' policing decision (Junior and Muniz, 2006), it is those who make these decisions who have the greatest individual power and the majority of the time this is outside the supervision of superiors. That reversal of power from the top brass to the 'bobby on the beat' is only exacerbated by providing greater police autonomy to the community police officer. Controlling that power is one of the great challenges of police reform and central to long standing efforts to increase scrutiny of police powers going back as far as the *Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984* and beyond (Henry, 2007a). SARA can be seen as providing a method for controlling the rank and file police officer who may be considered to be risking the possibility of using the notion of problem-solving to justify practices that either do not solve problems or aim to solve problems in ways that are beyond what is acceptable.

Officers spoken to during this research, particularly those who were being trained at the beginning of the implementation of the neighbourhood policing, found the guidelines involved somewhat overwhelming. Guidelines, they felt, were coming at them thick and fast from central government and head office and it was hard to keep up with the demands made on them. This is perhaps one of the great ironies of the

localization of policing priorities, they must be solved using methodologies prescribed by central government. At its heart neighbourhood policing's potential legitimacy is built on an aspiration towards a bygone era with a bobby on the beat in every village, deciding what was most appropriate for his area, yet the policy is imposed in a top-down and structured fashion by Headquarters and Home Office. Those pushing the guidelines from 'HQ and HO' are part of an 'MBA culture' and this tension between the centralized audit-driven New-managerialist bureaucrat and the neighbourhood sergeant looks set to be one of the ideological battlegrounds of policing in the near future (Neyroud, 2007: 218-220; Westmarland, 2008: 275-276).

The tension between strict technique and a more intuitive approach to problem-solving was noted by one NAG chair who described the problems that partners had with the police's strict problem-solving approach. Having been told how to problem-solve using the SARA and PAT techniques, the NAG decided to do the job its own way:

We jettisoned that process of problem-solving after we had gone through the whole process and found our three priority areas for work. For a number of reasons, it was partly to do with the speed of it. We did find, given that the make up of the NAG was people who were used to problem solving in their own way anyway, had their own networks and had a much speedier way of getting the smaller aspects of the project sorted out, rather than going through, what we thought to be a rather cumbersome process of, you know, of the identifying the victim and the whole triangular structure of problem-solving.

SARA is not, after all, the only way of solving a problem. The dependence on rigorous procedures may appeal to the police manager, but (as discussed in chapter 6) what works for the police or appeals to the police manager may not feel intuitively correct to every partner agency or individual. The neatly delineated sections of SARA are not as neat in practical terms, As Tilley puts it; 'In practice there is a good deal of feedback and overlap between stages, making the process messier than this tidy reconstruction might suggest' (Tilley, 2003). For these reasons, it is easy to see why a neighbourhood policing officer or other NAG member would prefer to take a more pragmatic approach than work within the strictures of SARA. This is borne out by the experiences observed in the two case study neighbourhoods (chapters 4 and 5) where the Neighbourhood Priority Profile for local problems were only rarely used as the focal point for debate at NAGs. SARA may be well thought out, and provide managers with tangible evidence of performance but its use on the ground at NAGs does not seem to have taken hold.

Difficulties with Problem-Solving in Neighbourhood Policing

As with partnership-working, problem-solving within the context of the NAG produces its own problems. From the observations of problem-solving work at the NAGs which was conducted for this research, it is clear that these problems can be categorized under six headings as follows:

1. Problems of definition (both political and administrative);
2. 'Teething problems' or problems associated with initiating a new programme;

3. 'Timeframe problems' which relate to the pressures of achieving something quickly;
4. Problems of ownership;
5. Problems of evaluation; and
6. Problems of sustainability.

Some of these problems can be observed clearly in the descriptions of NAG meetings already set out in the two preceding chapters. However, there is also other data from the case-study NAGs, other NAGs, interviews and discussions which can help to illustrate these difficulties and how they hinder the resolution of particular problems.

The *problem of definition* is two-fold. On the one hand there is the problem of selecting a problem (political definition). The second problem with definition arises when it comes to applying the processes of the problem-solving to the problem (administrative definition). These two problems are different and raise their own issues. The decision-making process that produces the political definition of a problem takes place in a temporally distinct location in the problem-solving process to the process that produces the administrative definition of the problem.

The process of *political definition* is perhaps best exemplified in the process of consultation with the community, which was discussed extensively in the context of how Neighbourhood B chose its problems (chapter 4). Choosing between the many competing possible applications of police resources (which, like all resources, and despite the claims of many politicians, are scarce), is an inherently political decision. Indeed Reiner argues that policing is 'inherently and inescapably political' because,

'their specific role in the enforcement of laws and the maintenance of order is as specialists in coercion. The craft of successful policing is to minimize the use of force but it remains the specialist resource of the police, their distinctive role in the political order' (2000a: 8). Policing of all forms, even so-called 'soft' forms such as neighbourhood policing are political in their very nature. No matter how broadly you consult, no matter how much you weigh it up, unless there were a world with no crime and no disputes (in which case, why consult with or indeed have a police force?), somebody has to be made the subject of police actions, somebody has to be 'othered'. The problems about deciding who it is that should be othered are somewhat obvious in a world that ostensibly aspires to respect the human dignity of all. Yet all policing, including neighbourhood policing and POP, must of its nature involve political decisions. However, after all the engagement of police with communities, neighbourhoods and stakeholders, it appears that the same sorts of problems arise, at least as far as the police are concerned. As one police manager put it; 'So in a nutshell, it's basically vehicle stuff, speeding, mini-motos, environmental issues, graffiti stroke vandalism, groups of young people, anti-social behaviour. That's it isn't it?' Although some neighbourhoods in the constabulary he pointed out, raised their own unique problems, perhaps related to locality-specific environmental considerations such as a motorway on-ramp or, as seen in this research, the garages in Neighbourhood A.

Beyond the problem of political definition, and once the consultation has produced the basic priorities, the problems of *administrative definition* begin to appear. Administrative definition in this instance is the process by which the problem-solver, in this case the NAG, actually defines the problem for practical purposes. So the

administrative definition of speeding should, as discussed above, be relatively easy to construct. 'Are cars going above thirty miles per hour in our neighbourhood?' At the other end of the spectrum, the administrative definition of anti-social behaviour is naturally far more complicated. The police officer in Neighbourhood B who had fixed ideas about anti-social behaviour being linked closely to outdoor drinking is clearly at odds in his concept of what anti-social behaviour is with the woman who showed up at the same NAG a few months later outlining to the group why young people hanging around was completely normal and nothing to be afraid of. How does such a NAG construct an administrative definition of anti-social behaviour in such a broad conceptual environment? To many practitioners the political definition may not necessarily be a problem, but the administrative definition is likely to be of great import. Without a proper administrative definition, a realistic, functioning intervention can be almost impossible to construct. Any possibility of evaluation almost entirely evaporates if the problem is too loosely defined. This feeds into how a NAG (or any other problem-solver) can relate to the 'public' who they purport to be solving the problem for. (This is discussed further under 'timeframe problems' below). While the problems of political definition may feel more metaphysical in their import, the question of producing an administrative definition can feed directly into how successful the NAG feels it is and how successful it can be at solving or ameliorating the problems before it.

'Teething problems' for the purposes of this work are the problems associated with the initiation of a new programme. Neighbourhood policing is itself a new concept and a new central government policy which has only been rolled out to include the entire of England and Wales on 1 April 2008. Within that new programme, the NAG

is a central element. According to a police manager interviewed for this research; 'The problem solvers are our Neighbourhood Action Groups.' Particularly in Neighbourhood A, which was a pilot for NAGs in the BCU, but also in the other NAGs studied in this research, there was a sense of new-ness, and 'learning the ropes' to the process. Although Neighbourhood A, by virtue of its pilot status, was more developed in its approach to problem solving, there were still instances when the NAG did not fully understand its capacity. An illustrative example was given in chapter 5. In this case the NAG was uncertain about how the process of making housing decisions worked. In attempting to solve the problem, some increases had to be made in the NAG's skill base or capacity to approach the problem.

Similar problems were observed in another NAG attended for the research. This was a newly established NAG in a different BCU, which was having trouble getting going. A facilitator was brought in from Headquarters to try and inspire the group into action. He went through the 'boardblast' procedure for finding out what the problems were in the particular neighbourhood. The SARA and PAT processes were introduced and he then discussed some of the possible solutions that the NAG could enact. The chair of the NAG was quite surprised at some of the suggestions, asking 'So is that the sort of thing that a NAG like us could be doing?' Aside from this inexperience, the new NAG was having substantial problems getting stakeholders to attend. The NAG wanted to engage with a licensee in the area and despite PCSOs visiting the premises and asking for a representative to attend, nobody showed up. Similar teething problems were observed in Neighbourhood B where the NAG wanted a representative of a large supermarket chain to attend. The chain had a small branch in the centre of Gamma Town and the congregation of young people outside the branch

was, it was felt, a cause of anti-social behaviour. Attendance of important and influential stakeholders can have an impact on the success of problem-solving throughout the length of the process, but in the initial stages it can have a substantial impact on the morale of a NAG. In tandem with the problem of attendance, the other great teething problem is finding a time which the NAG can agree to meet regularly. This has been a difficulty in all the NAGs which were observed, although the NAG in Neighbourhood A (chapter 5) seemed to be the most settled in so far as it met at the same time each month and in the same venue, a local school. Neighbourhood B (chapter 4) had a constant battle with individual diaries and timings and consequently lost certain partners from month to month, something which naturally hinders problem-solving or any form of multi-agency working. Teething problems often overlap or have a similar character to sustainability problems (discussed below) although the two are at different stages in the development of the NAG.

'Timeframe problems' relate to the sense of urgency felt by some members of NAGs to demonstrate results. It is clear that the problems typically selected by NAGs to work on are long term problems which repeatedly draw on police resources. Indeed one of the advantages of resolving a problem or even mitigating it, is that it would reduce the number of police call outs, or even fire-brigade call outs as in the case of bonfires in Neighbourhood A. Thus in the long run, POP should be good 'value for money' and pass muster in any 'cost-benefit analysis'. However care must be taken with expectations. Problems can be long-term and seemingly intractable and any intervention may take a substantial length of time, not only to implement, but to take effect. For example in Neighbourhood A, the problems associated with the garages could not be solved with simple interventions but required long term efforts to sort

out the environment which was deemed to be ASB-ogenic (ie the garages themselves). After more than a year of NAG meetings, little progress could be seen on the ground. Some problems need long term solutions.

This focus on long-term work can be something of a conceptual challenge, especially to front line police officers who are more used to response focussed policing, where resolution is achieved quickly, or perhaps immediately. Working on a long term goal can be frustrating. In tandem with the 'teething problems' discussed above, this can be a substantial challenge for a nascent NAG. Residents who join NAGs may find the slow pace of problem-solving and the seemingly incessant boardblasts and evidence gathering to be a disheartening experience. Indeed in Neighbourhood B a number of members resigned early in their period of involvement in the NAG because nothing was being done, or they perceived that to be the case. This has driven the thirst for 'quick wins' that was observed in all the NAGs attended. Each NAG hoped to achieve something tangible in the short term in order to display their success.

Quick wins are also about momentum and morale for the members as well as an outward display of success. From observing the meetings, it appears that the desire to achieve quick wins is driven by the idea that if the NAG can produce a quick win while it is working on a long term problem, members will be buoyed by their achievement and conduct work consistently on the longer term goal. Similarly, an increase in confidence from small successes may help increase the NAG's or individual members' capacity to conduct work on longer term problem-solving. The thirst for quick wins is all pervasive and referred to by managers, residents, facilitators and agency partners alike. In a sense it relates to some members' feelings

of obligation to the community. This is particularly the case with residents in the two case-study neighbourhoods who reported back to the NAGs that there was a sense among fellow residents that the NAG was doing nothing and achieving even less. This is perhaps an unfortunate side-effect to the fact that the police, as the twenty-four hour social-service of last resort, is the body charged with dealing with 'something-that-ought-not-to-be-happening-and-about-which-someone-had-better-do-something-now!' (Bittner, 1990). The police are associated with immediacy, both internally (in their own individual and collective consciousnesses and expectations) and externally (by their various 'publics'). It is the obvious tension between that immediacy and the process of problem-solving in the long-term which is at the heart of the concept of 'timeframe problems' and it is that same tension that drives the thirst for 'quick wins'.

Problems of ownership are perhaps recognisable to anybody who has worked within a committee, be it professionally, for a sports club or for some other voluntary venture. When something has to be done, somebody has to do it. It has been apparent a number of times within both case-study NAGs that there is often a reluctance to take on a task, and there can also be a sense that tasks are not chased up. It is easy to understand the reluctance. As discussed in the previous chapter most people at NAGs are there on top of their normal day to day workload or are volunteers. The only people who are truly there 'on the meter' are the police. Thus taking on almost any task for the NAG occurs out of a sense of voluntarism. A good example of this problem is the work in Neighbourhood A on signs about damage to garages. The idea was to place signs up near garages that were known to attract anti-social behaviour in order to try to raise awareness of the problem, and increase confidence in reporting problems to the police. This may appear to be a relatively straightforward intervention, however

getting such signs into place was a struggle for the NAG. There was substantial to-ing and fro-ing about who was to put up the signs. Similarly, the question of who was to pay for the signs was something of a problem, as NAGs have no independent funding and thus rely on the goodwill of other agencies to fund any of their initiatives, or direct the funding towards issues which are of relevance to the problems the NAG is working on. To motivate the resources of time and co-ordination involved in implementing even a simple intervention such as signage near garages takes a significant amount of individual effort and skill. This is something that may not be so simple to generate in a disparate group such as a NAG.

Many attendees, particularly those representing partners, and especially the Council and community safety partnership, attend numerous NAGs each month. For those partners, where any one NAG is merely one of many, there can be a reluctance to take on tasks which go beyond the operation of their current (often already overstretched) role. One council officer interviewed for this research pointed out the whiteboard in his office which detailed the location of his staff each day. In so doing he was illustrating the number of NAGs which staff had to attend. Each NAG means substantial time out of the office, and some NAGs are in the evenings, which eats into the employee's personal time and necessitates that they be provided with 'time off in lieu'. These time pressures on partners, with no parallel increase in resources, make it difficult for some partners to operate to their full capacity. This drain on time can make it challenging for a partner employee to take ownership of even a small project, or at the least create a reluctance to do so. Similarly, if they are double booked and a colleague has to attend a NAG for them (which was a common occurrence in the case-study neighbourhoods), there is no consistency of ownership over any project

that they do take on. If somebody who has taken on a task misses a meeting outright, the task can become completely lost from the perspective of the NAG quite quickly. It is easy for a NAG to discuss something, but it is more difficult for the group to tie down what exactly the 'actions' that arise from the end of any discussion are. This problem is well known to anyone who has worked in a committee. It is difficult for a NAG chair to strike the balance between being productive (by chasing up actions) and being pushy and this skill is central to the success of any NAG. The chair's role in tying down actions, finding an owner for the actions, and chasing them up the following month is essential to successfully moving forward the NAG's objectives. It is also crucial to the group's morale that it feels like it is ticking some of its boxes, no matter how small those boxes may at first appear to be.

Problems of evaluation are apparent across the entire criminal justice system (Logan, 1990; Pawson and Tilley, 1994; Sherman *et al.*, 1998; Crow, 2000; Tilley, 2000, 2001; Miethe and McCorkle, 2002; Williams *et al.*, 2006; Smithson and Rogerson, 2007). As discussed in chapter 2 of this thesis, the search for a way of quantifying crime is beset with problems. So how can a NAG tell if it is doing well or not? The problem of evaluation is inextricably linked up with the problem of definition. If the administrative definition of the problem is not carefully constructed, it will be almost impossible to assess how well the problem has been addressed. Without this knowledge the problem-solving process cannot be properly honed down or improved upon. This is perhaps why there is a second 'A' in SARA. The problem-solving methodology provided by Headquarters mandates that the problem-solver (the NAG) assess how successful it has been in attempting to solve its problems. The Neighbourhood Priority Profile (NPP) contains a section for the assessment.

However, during this research, the most developed NPP seen, which was on garages in Neighbourhood A, had not yet reached a position where any assessment had taken place. So it is impossible (and perhaps pointless or even unethical) to draw conclusions on something that has not yet happened. What it is possible to discuss briefly is the significance of the evaluation problem. The assessment component of the NPP asks two questions:

1. Was the response a success and what evidence is there of this?
2. What lessons can be learned from this response?

It is clear from this that the problem-solver is supposed to use the assessment to learn from the process. This learning, one imagines, will assist the NAG in being a better problem-solver in the future, which goes to assist the NAG in becoming a sustainable node of security governance over time (see below, problems of sustainability). It may also help the NAG to increase morale and create incentive for people to take ownership of future projects which are deemed to have been successful. The question of evidence however, raises some difficult questions. What is 'good' evaluative evidence? Academically rigorous evaluation is unlikely to take place in all thirty-two NAGs in the BCU, so what is the bar for 'evidence'? It is unclear from the NPP what exactly counts as 'evidence' for the 'Assessment' stage of SARA. The closest thing any NAG studied came to evaluating their responses was the collection of discussions about bonfire night in Neighbourhood A. A wide range of data, from members' personal experiences to official police statistics were drawn upon to assess the merits of each of the responses. Although no NPP assessment was filled out, it seems that

these are the types of evidence that will be used in evaluating other interventions by the case-study NAGs and other NAGs in future NPPs.

Problems of sustainability loom large on the horizon for new NAGs. Neighbourhood A was a pilot NAG and as such it benefitted from a degree of novelty and interest as well as a special degree of effort to get it going. Yet as the roll-out of NAGs continues, the pressure on resources of all partners increases. How likely are NAGs to be able to maintain a consistent level of work on problem-solving in the face of these increasing pressures? The answer may depend largely on how motivated individual NAG members are to keep things moving along and to maintain morale. Initial pilot NAGs have obtained substantial support from police and community safety partnership facilitators, who attend many, if not all of the meetings, but at some point, the NAGs are going to need to operate substantially on their own. They will need to conduct their own evaluations and move on with their own learnings for each of their problems. In the two case-study NAGs in this research the facilitator drove much of the boardblast work and assisted in trying to move discussions on constitutions forward as well as trying to keep the NAG focussed on local community safety business. Towards the end of the research period there was some agreement that the local neighbourhood sergeant would begin to take on some responsibility for some of the support and administrative work attached to the running of a NAG. This seems like a natural thing to do, draw on the officer who is at the NAG most consistently and supposed to be closest to the neighbourhood. However, there are a number of problems with this from the point of sustainability. The first is that the oft-repeated problem of abstraction of police officers. Throughout the period of research, the police staff who were working on neighbourhood policing in the BCU changed

relatively regularly. In both case study neighbourhoods, the officer in charge of neighbourhood policing moved to another location or role within the force, and in one case an officer emigrated. If they are in charge of the administration of the NAG's business, then the possibility for lost information, knowledge and momentum is substantial. The second problem is that if the police officer is responsible for keeping the NAG moving, focussed on its priorities and running smoothly, this runs the risk of the initiative becoming merely a police-led talking shop. It sends a clear message to those who do attend that NAGs are not about working together but about following a police agenda. This is in fact something that the police themselves do not seem to want, yet it is an almost inevitable message if the neighbourhood police officer is driving the NAG. The problems of staff turnover were also visible in other partner agencies during this research. Similarly, maintaining the interest of local residents can be difficult. While problems of definition and teething problems may appear to be the most problematic at the start, it is clear that the question of sustainability will be a real challenge to NAGs in the near future and the problems of sustainability were already evident in this research.

The six problems outlined above are clearly intertwined and a NAG will face each problem to varying degrees at each step in its development. However, they are not strictly chronological in their impact, nor are they necessarily obviously problematic when they do apply (for example the problems of political definition may not appear to be problems at all to a NAG that is certain of the moral rectitude of its priorities). However many of the problems feed each other. If a problem receives a poor administrative definition this will have a huge impact on how an intervention is selected and implemented (which can manifest in teething problems). This can in turn

create unrealistic expectations which can feed timeframe problems and evaluation problems. Evaluation, as the feedback on how well the NAG is doing is central to the effectiveness of the group. If there are evaluation problems, caused by a poor administrative definition or the use of inappropriate evaluation techniques, this can make it difficult to inspire members to take ownership of tasks within the project, or create a feeling of uncertainty and lack of morale in the group. Finally, it is clear that each of the first five problems create obstacles to the long term sustainability of the NAG as a node of security governance. Sustainability is of course central to the success of the NAG as a problem-solver and producer of community safety.

Neighbourhood Action Groups and Intelligence-Led Policing

We have already discussed how central the notion of 'intelligence-led policing' is to the TVP's management in signing off a new neighbourhood as ready to operate. However the concept of intelligence-led policing can be somewhat slippery and difficult to see in action, particularly at NAGs. Undoubtedly there is some sort of intelligence being used by NAGs as they conduct their partnership and problem-solving roles, but unlike POP, it is a little harder to see the formal workings of ILP in a NAG's day to day, or meeting to meeting, operations. For this reason this section of the chapter is necessarily brief and tries to connect the debate and discussion on ILP with the realities of how the NAGs studied have behaved in terms of using intelligence in their operations.

ILP is essentially 'forward-looking' in its approach, in that it attempts to reduce future crimes. It is thus different to traditional response policing, which is obviously more retrospective and responsive (Maguire and John, 2006). This forward-looking

approach is why ILP and POP are often considered together, and arguably why they are central to notions of community policing (see discussion in chapter 1). Both strategies are attempting to prevent crime either by solving perennial problems (POP), or by finding out in advance where crime is likely to take place, or where it is being planned, and to intervene to prevent such actions (ILP). So it would seem that a small locally-focussed node of security governance such as a NAG would have an interest in reaping the benefits from successfully operated ILP. However, it is hard to detect the formal usage of ILP in the NAGs studied. There are a number of reasons for this. 'Intelligence' itself is a nebulous concept and its use can involve substantial risks, as discussed above (chapter 1). For this reason it can be hard for the NAG to feel as if it is formally using an ILP approach. There were allusions made by police officers and facilitators to bringing information to the attention of the local Joint Tactics and Tasking Committee meeting, but it did not seem entirely clear what this would do for the NAG and there was no response of marked enthusiasm from the group when this type of approach was suggested.

In the course of this research, there was no explicit explanation of the concepts involved in ILP given to NAG members (other than police staff) and no explanation of what they could do to have an impact on the ILP process, or at least to help it along. ILP appeared to remain almost entirely the 'property' of the police. Yet within the police there was also some difficulty observed with gathering information. As part of the research, a neighbourhood policing training day was observed at the Force's training centre. There were numerous speakers dealing with many areas of neighbourhood policing, but it was the police manager who spoke about making entries into the NIM that was most relevant here. He spoke about the process of

making entries into the NIM and how important this is. However, unlike the other speakers who were very positive and upbeat about their respective areas of neighbourhood policing, the NIM speaker was downbeat. The volume of entries to NIM was not as substantial as they could be and as a result the power of the system was being reduced. The speaker was exceedingly concerned about this, not least because HMIC had said that the TVP was not good at gathering information from the community. He thus exhorted all the officers new to neighbourhood policing to make entries in the NIM, regardless of how insignificant they may seem, so the force could begin to develop a picture of what was going on. At the end of the presentation, it did not seem that the NIM contained a huge amount of valuable information. Interestingly, a TVP report published at around the same time (Bowes, 2005) showed that PCSOs in the TVP were providing more data to the NIM than police officers. This may be because they are closer to the community and better at gathering the data or they are more diligent about entering what they do find, although the report could not say which was the case.

Apart from the slipperiness of definition and the problems of motivating police staff to enter data they do find, there were other problems encountered with regard to NAGs, neighbourhood policing and ILP. Police managers seemed to be aware of the debate about what exactly 'intelligence' is and had to make their own decisions on how to conceptualize what ILP meant in the context of that, as yet unresolved, debate:

[T]here's a whole argument about what's information and what's intelligence and we've developed a model for recording community information, which then needs to be assessed and the argument goes, well

one of the arguments goes; 'intelligence is any information that has been evaluated for policing purposes'. So it is presented at a neighbourhood level and it is recorded and stored at a neighbourhood level. It is then reviewed and if it is identified as significant for purpose, then it will be lifted into the intelligence sphere. None the less that information is still valid and still useful for the policing of that particular neighbourhood. And that's been a learning because it's quite a new thing.

Its 'new-ness' is perhaps because ILP and neighbourhood policing are not quite as good partners as they might at first appear. ILP can certainly benefit from the information that can be drawn from the local neighbourhood, but what can neighbourhood policing really get back in return? If neighbourhood policing is all about reassuring the neighbourhood and increasing their trust in the police, how useful is it to go about trying to squeeze information from individuals about others in their neighbourhood? Striking the right balance is exceptionally difficult. It is also something that, in the present research, did not appear to have been conducted in terms of a partnership. ILP appeared at all times to be something that the police 'owned' and 'did' and not something that the NAG was itself involved in. A good example was given in chapter 5 of the police saying they had their 'spies' who could give them information about anti-social behaviour relating to garages and this could be used in an enforcement drive. However the veracity of the information or what it might reveal were not discussed with the NAG. The partner agencies must always take it on trust from the police that the intelligence is worth relying on. ILP in operation lacks transparency and perhaps that is the vicious circle of 'intelligence'. To get it one must not say who gave it to you, which means it can never be corroborated,

which allows it to be interpreted without scrutiny, and such interpreted intelligence can itself become intelligence, whose source cannot be revealed or scrutinised. And so on, *ad infinitum*. Any work on building a Key Individual Network, which is the formal name of the police's network of informants, is conducted by the police and the police alone. So while the police are keen to piggy back on any information or intelligence that is brought forth by partners at a NAG, there was no reciprocity of information, access to intelligence, or scrutiny of that intelligence. This was borne out in the NAGs observed, where the police gave little or no information away to NAGs. Indeed they are often in a legal bind with regard to such information as, for example, when in one NAG meeting in Neighbourhood B the police officer could not tell the group anything about an ongoing investigation in the area. For the purposes of ILP, information or intelligence was in this research observed to be a one way flow.

On the other hand, NAGs were observed generating substantial amounts of what the police manager quoted above would refer to as 'information' (in so far as that it has yet to be evaluated for policing purposes). EVAs are a perfect example of information which could be evaluated for policing purposes. The EVAs in both case study NAGs were conducted by a combination of local residents and PCSOs and provided the groups with information, and evidence on where their priority problems were primarily located. This information was largely collected to assist with POP, particularly for the 'scanning' part of SARA. So while the NAG may have been gathering information, it may not have strictly been being used as 'intelligence'. The NAGs however were observed using the information for other ends in their role as a locally focussed node of security governance. They used information about anti-social behaviour in some housing blocks in Neighbourhood B as evidence that there was a

problem which merited the appropriate housing association to send a representative to the NAG. Although not formally an entry in the NIM, or an example of ILP *stricto sensu*, it is an illustration of the group using intelligence, as it interprets it (although it would probably be merely 'information' as the police interpret it), to attempt to achieve its own ends. These ends, to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood, are in fact relatively congruent with the ends of the police force itself. In a world where concepts such as 'intelligence', 'information', 'policing', 'crime' and 'anti-social behaviour' are so difficult to grasp firmly and control, it is suggested that such use of evidence gathered by the NAG could be considered to be part of a larger concept of ILP. This is notwithstanding, of course, the fact that the NAG's use of information and intelligence does not fit neatly within the formal structures of ILP or the NIM.

Some of the risks of the use of intelligence are inherent in any NAG's use of intelligence. These include individual prejudices or preferences influencing what gets fed into any evidence gathering, particularly from local residents. Indeed, as discussed above, the police and some chairs are well aware of this risk as they often make the statement 'the NAG is not a talking shop'. However, unlike the other forms of covert intelligence gathering, the information the NAG gathers itself is gathered in a far more transparent fashion. The NAG information (be it EVAs, or 'boardblasts') is gathered and discussed by all the members of the group. Often it can be shot down as being exaggerated, for example claims that there was a lot of drug paraphernalia in Neighbourhood B was removed from the list of evidence when it was challenged by a number of members. This sort of information, which is a collection of lived experiences of people with a stake in the locality, is arguably more reliable than

intelligence which is collected ‘behind closed doors’. However, perhaps the greater questions for the police are ‘how useful is this information?’ or ‘how much of this information is “noise”?’ ‘Noise’ is one of the organizational pathologies which Sheptycki (2004) outlines as being a substantial obstacle to ILP. Essentially the difficulties derived from ‘noise’ are that the police can get far too much information, and sifting through it all and knowing which is useful is a difficult (and one must imagine, rather dreary) process. From the perspective of formal ILP and the NIM, there may be some valuable intelligence derived from NAGs, but it is likely that it will be hard to root out from the noise. For this formal approach, the important factor is how the information is sorted, graded or assessed. However, individual NAGs will use their own information in their own ways to construct their partnership agendas and while not strictly ‘intelligence-led policing’ could be considered ‘information-led partnership’.

ILP may benefit from NAGs as they become more sustainable, however it was not clear in this research how much of an impact NAGs actually had in terms of providing useful and workable information for the NIM and ILP. Further research on ILP and its practical workings, both within a neighbourhood context and more broadly, will help to gain a greater understanding of the process. However, it is likely to be hampered by the confidential and secret nature of intelligence and the lack of transparency in how intelligence is gathered and used.

Conclusion

It is clear that neighbourhood policing entails elements of numerous policing strategies including community policing, problem-oriented policing and intelligence-

led policing. This chapter has looked at the relationship between neighbourhood policing and POP and ILP, particularly as they relate to the NAG. The NAG is considered to be both the main focus of problem-solving in neighbourhood policing and a useful potential source of 'community information' which could be interpreted into 'intelligence' for policing purposes. This chapter has looked at the relationship between these two policing strategies and neighbourhood policing. Particular attention was paid to the problem-solving process.

Problem-solving policing has come to involve the use of the twin techniques known as SARA, and PAT. These neat techniques belie a much messier approach when they are applied on the ground and indeed the process of problem-solving may not be as rigorous and methodical as police managers might prefer. These techniques, which are imposed into the bureaucratic process of neighbourhood policing by means of documents such as Neighbourhood Priority Profiles (which walks a NAG step by step through the SARA process as it applies to a priority problem) can also be seen as a method of controlling the use of police discretion among lower ranking neighbourhood officers. Indeed this research found evidence that some NAGs and neighbourhood police officers preferred to ignore the strictures of the SARA and PAT and work on solving problems using other techniques that they felt more appropriate to their neighbourhood. Problem-solving to them does not need to be so rigorous.

There are a number of difficulties with a problem-solving approach. Some of them hinge on the problems of partnership discussed in the previous chapter. This research identified six problems which hinder the application of problem-solving techniques by NAGs as part of neighbourhood policing. These were named; *problems of definition*

(both political and administrative) of the problem itself; *'teething problems'* or problems associated with initiating a new programme; *'timeframe problems'* which relate to the pressures of achieving something quickly; *problems of ownership* of different tasks agreed in the construction of interventions; *problems of evaluation*; and *problems of sustainability*. Each of these problems may appear at different stages in the NAG's work on problem-solving. Some of the problems may feed into each other, for example a poorly defined problem may cause the NAG difficulties later in evaluating their intervention. Perhaps the greatest challenge for the NAG as a node of security governance using a problem-solving approach is the last one; sustainability. How well a NAG survives as an effective node will depend on how well it overcomes the difficulties of problem solving outlined here.

The chapter also looked at the relationship between ILP and neighbourhood policing. Although there is much talk of the role of ILP in neighbourhood policing, it is argued here that they are not such good bedfellows. While a NAG may be an invaluable mine of local 'community information' which can feed into national or regional intelligence-led policing agendas, it is hard to see what the NAG itself will get in return for this. NAGs gather evidence of crime and anti-social behaviour as part of their problem-solving work which could feed into ILP databases such as the NIM, but what is the NAG's incentive to do this? It is argued here that NAGs are more likely to be interested in using their 'information' for the purposes of their own lobbying or campaigning, as was evidenced in the efforts to collect evidence of anti-social behaviour in Neighbourhood B to try to convince a local housing authority that they needed to be involved. NAGs may use their 'information' for their own means, but it is unclear how likely they are to be of real use to the national ILP agenda.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Neighbourhood policing is a new programme for policing set out by central government to bring a bespoke policing service to each neighbourhood in England and Wales. Whether it marks a new 'era' in policing is hard to tell. However, using Wood and Shearing's (2007: Chapter 2) concept of 'waves' of public policing (see chapter 1) it is possible that neighbourhood policing is an example of one such wave of public policing in Britain. Given that '[a] "waves-based" view recognizes multiple, and often overlapping, mentalities that have emerged across times and places' (ibid: 35), it is possible to view neighbourhood policing as a 'wave' which has drawn on numerous mentalities which have influenced its formation, without it necessarily being a complete seachange in how policing is conducted. Those mentalities may include a variety of diverse influences. This may include the impact of substantial changes in the way late modern life in Britain is lived, for example, the increasing social and cultural diversity of the population, the proliferation of travel opportunities which allow for the wide geographical spread of an individual's lived experience, increased commercialism and reduced deference, to choose just a few (Hunt, 1991 [1996]; Garland, 2002: Chapter 4) Similarly, the proliferation of private means of security provision that has gone hand in hand with this has forced the police to consider what role they have in the provision of security in a diverse marketplace. Finally, at a time when crime was falling, and fear of crime rising (Crawford, 2006b: 148) the police were facing a challenge in the form of a 'reassurance gap' between how well they were performing against measures of crime (however fraught with difficulties such measures are, see chapter 2) and how people viewed their own risk of victimization. These influences, amongst others, are behind the formation of a

neighbourhood policing strategy. These are among the 'overlapping mentalities that have emerged across times and places' to combine to form this wave of public policing.

These mentalities however are a minefield of indeterminate and slippery subjectivities. The language of neighbourhood policing is awash with words and concepts we all think we understand, yet have a vast plurality of meanings, depending on the context and the political perspective of the person or entity invoking nebulous notions such as 'community', 'anti-social behaviour', 'policing' or 'consumer' (chapters 1 and 2). The contestable nature of so many of the concepts that underpin neighbourhood policing undoubtedly provides a challenge for the practitioner on the ground; What is a workable neighbourhood? Who are my public? Are they a community? How do I consult with them? Is there a problem I can get sufficient consensus on to verify its existence and is it 'worth' working on? How should we go about trying to solve it? How do we measure the success of our work? How do we convince people of our legitimacy in doing this work? The neighbourhood police officer or other concerned community safety worker will have to grapple with these tricky concepts and create their own working definitions of them, along with notions of how to use them, in order to implement neighbourhood policing and problem-solving interventions. However pragmatic the responses, it must be remembered that almost every notion underpinning neighbourhood policing can be, and has been, contested.

As well as the contestable nature of its conceptual foundations, neighbourhood policing is also under pressure from the weight of expectations about what it can

deliver. In connecting to local neighbourhoods and responding to local needs, neighbourhood policing is variously expected to; increase police accountability, increase police legitimacy, assist in the gathering of intelligence, solve local policing problems, reduce crime and provide reassurance so as to reduce fear of crime. This is quite an agenda for one policing programme to concern itself with and it is hard to see how one programme can achieve all of these policy goals simultaneously. Yet neighbourhood policing exists in a late modern world where security provision is available from an exceptionally wide collection of providers. Many providers from outside the 'public police' are proliferating within this 'plural policing' and may be able to provide security to those who seek it. The resulting provision of private security could conceivably have the effect of making the public police an anachronistic irrelevance. If people want to feel safer, even when they are objectively at a low risk of victimization, why not try to provide that publicly before those who are able to afford to do so, 'go private' for their security needs? Thus creating a 'security divide' similar to the 'digital divide', whereby those who have least access to resources are unable to access security provision adequate to their needs.

This 'security divide' is perhaps the greatest challenge for neighbourhood policing. In bridging that divide neighbourhood policing can provide an egalitarian bridge between those with the influence to provide their own security and those without it. In conceptualizing the role of neighbourhood policing within this plural body of security providers, it can be helpful if all the plural or fragmented security providers are considered to be 'nodes of security governance'. That is to say they can be thought of as locations (nodes) of individual or corporate interests attempting to supply, purchase, control, access or influence the various methods of security provision. Each

node is linked to others by means of influence, geography, contract, statutory provision or other connection, this complex 'security quilt' of interacting nodes provides a useful way to consider the provision of security in contemporary society. It is clear from this commodification process, that providing security is no longer a task reserved to the public police (if it ever were actually so reserved). Where that leaves the public police is an interesting question. However it is undoubtedly true that they still have a role, if only in trying to address the imbalances inherent in leaving the market to resolve something as fundamental as the security of the public to go about their lives in relative safety. Can neighbourhood policing and its NAGs, working as nodes of security governance, provide a bridge over that security divide? If so, how would they go about doing so and how do they provide services that are appropriate to those who are most vulnerable while at the same time providing an inclusive and relevant service to all of the police's public? That is the challenge of the future of policing and it is yet to be seen if neighbourhood policing can be an effective part of meeting that challenge.

How successful is Neighbourhood Policing?

This research began by trying to 'measure outcomes in citizen focussed local policing' and has become a study of the roll-out of neighbourhood policing, particularly in two case study neighbourhoods in the Thames Valley. However the question remains, how successful is neighbourhood policing, and if it is too early to tell, how successful can it be? These are difficult questions because of the problems of evaluating policing generally, and neighbourhood policing in particular. Policing generally is difficult to evaluate because of the problems of quantifying hard to define concepts such as 'crime' and 'anti-social behaviour'. It is also difficult to measure

how successful the police are at maintaining, (or at least not losing any further) legitimacy among certain sections of the public. In the case study neighbourhoods in this research participants were observed saying that although the interventions to reduce anti-social behaviour on bonfire night had not reduced call outs to the fire service and police, they had increased neighbourhood cohesion and community spirit and were thus a success. Similarly it was pointed out that an increase in calls reporting crime to the police might in fact be a sign that the NAG was successful because it indicated that local residents were becoming more confident in the police. In short, one of the things they had achieved was to make people come to consider it worthwhile to call the police. What is clear is that in either of these interpretations, the police are in fact in a win-win situation, because regardless of what happens to recorded crime or reports to the police of anti-social behaviour, they have a method of interpretation of that change as being an achievement in terms of one of the goals of neighbourhood policing (crime up: the people trust us more so call us more. Crime down: we have reduced crime). It is not argued that this is some sort of well thought out conspiracy on the part of police and Home Office planners to create a win-win environment for themselves. This is a description of different responses made by on-the-ground practitioners. They are responding to different quantification data in this way. This malleable response is indicative of the difficulties associated with creating a programme that has such loose conceptual basis.

This fluidity, and lack of 'certainty' or 'objectivity' need not be a bad thing however. It might be used productively to allow NAGs to view short term changes in crime data in a positive light. This can be good for morale in a NAG and could help a NAG to avoid becoming hung up on short term results and 'quick wins' and focus on more

long term interventions. This fluidity could be used perhaps to solve the timeframe problems discussed in chapter 7. These are the problems associated with a NAG's desire to be seen to have achieved something as it establishes itself. The NAG can feel like it needs to develop some momentum. Such immediate effects are obviously difficult to achieve when working on long standing local problems. Any help that the fluidity of definition provides to a NAG in smoothing over these problems may be useful to its long term success. Similarly, the fluidity potentially allows for NAGs to be more creative in how they construct interventions to try to solve their priority problems. If NAGs are only concerned with driving down police or BCS crime data, they may only focus on interventions that are perceived to have an immediate effect on those data-sets. However, if the NAG is able to work on problems in a more holistic manner, it may be able to increase public satisfaction with the response and thus create a tolerance or understanding of a problem (eg young people hanging around or people driving at 28 mph in a 30 mph zone) which might be a far better result than a reduced number of calls to the police.

The fluidity of definition potentially allows space for the individual NAG to apply the skills of their members to a problem rather than be constrained by a set of skills or type of behaviour prescribed by police or central government. This is particularly useful because it means that a committed NAG member, with wide local knowledge and commitment to their area can use their personal networks and connections to create bespoke responses. Responses that might suit a neighbourhood in the Thames Valley far better than anything that could be created in Whitehall. The flexibility of loose definitions and aims allows for a greater personalized response when

implementing neighbourhood policing and harnessing the skills and resources brought to the NAG by its constituent members.

On the other hand, this fluidity of definition, and the concomitant problems of gauging success provides the opportunity for something more insidious to occur. It is entirely possible for one group or individual to use a NAG as a personal fiefdom to work on their pet problem. This could be to use the NAG's access to various resources for the benefit of interests which are either not priority problems as decided in consultation, or are some sort of response which is wholly inappropriate to the role of the public police in providing a 'public policing service'. The extreme form of this personal use of a NAG was not observed in this research, yet more nuanced forms were. The debates over anti-social behaviour and its definition in Neighbourhood B for example are indicative of how easy it would be for a charismatic resident, chair, police officer or other attendee to manipulate the administrative definitions of what 'anti-social behaviour' the NAG is to work on, towards issues of personal concern to themselves. There is no easy way to patrol this type of behaviour especially as NAGs become more self sustaining. A constitution cannot prevent small scale politicking, however malignant, if it is draped in the cover of loosely defined terms and has the consent (tacit or otherwise) of a majority of the members of the NAG. If providing policing solutions to the most pressing problems affecting a neighbourhood, as determined by residents, is one of the aims of neighbourhood policing, care needs to be taken that the project is not hijacked for personal (albeit plausibly local and laudable) agendas.

The flexibility inherent in the subjectivities discussed in chapters 1 and 2 is perhaps the great strength of neighbourhood policing. Flexibility allows for the local neighbourhood public to decide what it wants and how it wants to get it. However it also risks the manipulation of policing for personal or other reasons. This flexibility also causes problems in judging how successful neighbourhood policing is. It is completely conceivable that a neighbourhood might be constituted of a public with consistent ideas of what it wants a NAG to work on, and how it should do so. Meanwhile the adjacent neighbourhood might be completely divided about what its priority problems are and have no local support for police interventions. It is clear that the former has an easy road to success. The latter may never be successful, unless we use a carefully chosen measure of success which can show improvement, for example one based on 'outputs' rather than 'outcomes' (Garland, 1996: 458). In this 'choose your own adventure' approach to measuring success, both NAGs can be judged to be successful. Perhaps the beauty of neighbourhood policing is that it can always be a success. This may be the beauty of the programme in one sense, but it is suggested here, as argued above, that the real test of success for neighbourhood policing will be different. The test of its success will be its ability to sustain within the complex fragmented world of security governance a public-policing presence which can look after those with no 'buy-in' to the commercial security marketplace. Furthermore, it must do so without alienating those who do have such 'buy-in'. If neighbourhood policing fails to do that, then it cannot be considered a success. How one would measure that success or failure, is almost impossible to say.

Findings of this research

This research has observed the early stages of the implementation of a 'new' form of policing as it is applied in England and Wales. However, there may be something in the argument that neighbourhood policing is not as new as it is made out to be. It may be argued that neighbourhood policing is simply 'old policing wine in new policing bottles'. In this analysis neighbourhood policing is merely a return to 'community policing' or a move to try to bring back the 'bobby on the beat'. However it is argued here that neighbourhood policing is different. Neighbourhood policing is distinct from these local projects in that it is nationwide, and driven by central government, unlike many previous forms of community policing. It is also unique in that it is the first time so many different policing strategies (ILP, POP, multi-agency partnership working, and community policing) have been combined to work on every neighbourhood in the jurisdiction. The nexus of these locally-focussed policing strategies in each neighbourhood is the NAG and this research provides a useful analysis of how neighbourhood policing has worked in its early days in the case study areas. There are three main findings from this research and each is discussed below.

First, in a 'plural policing' environment as experienced in many late modern democracies, a 'nodal governance of security' theory is a useful analytical tool for understanding the experience of the NAG as it implements neighbourhood policing. Second, working in partnership to solve problems which have traditionally been the preserve of the police produces some substantial problems, including the 'criminalization of social policy' and 'youth' as well as other more mundane obstacles to success. Finally, the application of new policing strategies, particularly POP, but

including ILP, to the process of partnership working and a community-oriented policing approach produces its own set of difficulties.

Applying a 'nodal governance of security' analysis to Neighbourhood Policing and NAGs

The central argument made by this work is that the application of the theory of 'nodal governance' of security is a useful and insightful way to conceive of neighbourhood policing. In particular it is useful in understanding the NAG itself as a node of security governance which is part of a large network of other nodes, each attempting to provide, permit, control or obtain some form of security for its constituents, members or other interests. In an environment or era of so-called 'plural policing' the police are only one organization involved in the provision of a diverse smorgasboard of security products ranging from CCTV and safes to bodyguard, bouncers and security dogs. There is a massive market for security products in the UK. Crawford (2008) cites research suggesting that there are as many as 150,000 private security officers in the UK, while Jones and Newburn (2006a) used census data to come to a similar conclusion. While the exact figure may be tricky to pin down, it is certainly a substantial number. Within this marketplace, those with the most resources can obtain the 'most' security. If 'policing' in this broad interpretation of the concept is to be made sense of, the researcher must look beyond merely the public police as a provider of 'security' or the products which go towards creating whatever it is that 'security' is. Each gated community, school, campus, industrial estate or apartment block has its own security interests and its own security providers and each of these fits neatly into the definition of a node of security governance. Describing and understanding how they interact is central to understanding this new security environment (see chapter 6).

This work has looked at one such node, the NAG, and described how it operates and interacts with other nodes and with its public and partners. The NAG is one local node driven perhaps by the police, but which is distinct from, and may come into tension with, the greater node of the police force itself.

Is the nodal governance approach a useful way of understanding how neighbourhood policing works, or could work? There are a number of reasons why a nodal governance approach is a useful way to conceptualize neighbourhood policing. Such an approach allows for a description of the NAG as the central focus of locally inspired policing. This description is one that can accommodate the many, sometimes competing, demands and expectations at play in the roll-out of neighbourhood policing. Each of these demands places pressures on the node which hold it (the node) in place and influence the methods it employs and its motivations for employing them. More than any other theoretical framework, the nodal governance analysis allows for a description of the NAG and its influences which is helpful in that it allows the observer to understand the experience of the NAG within the greater late-modern world of 'plural policing'.

Conceiving of the NAG as one such node with hundreds of such interactions allows the observer to begin to chart the relationships between nodes and to begin to understand what it is that is helping them or hindering them in achieving their security provision goals. Locating any individual NAG within such a web may also have advantages for the practitioner who can begin to break down the NAG's relationship with partner organizations and to understand how their interests coincide or conflict. Using this nodal governance approach has allowed the second set of findings of this

research to be brought into light, the problems faced by NAGs in partnership working and problem solving.

The problems faced by NAGs in partnership working

Once the problems which are most important to an area are decided upon, a NAG must work as a partnership of its members in an effort to try to solve those problems. The next section will discuss the findings of this research which specifically relate to problem-solving, this section discusses the contribution that this research has made to the discourse of partnership working. Chapter 6 discusses this interaction and describes it using a nodal governance of security approach. The chapter also goes on to describe some of the problems associated with partnership working and to describe how they manifest themselves within a NAG as a local node of security governance. Three main problems were identified. The first is that each of the members of any NAG will have a different corporate or individual *raison d'être* and thus will be motivated by, and geared towards achieving, different policy, profit or personal goals. Not everyone who is mandated to attend a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership is in fact solely motivated towards reducing crime. This is the same with a NAG. A partner, such as a council, with a mandate for a whole city or county may aspire to provide a bespoke service to each NAG, but often will not have the resources or motivation to make such a service happen. Indeed it may clash with their overall structures and planning for providing services across the whole region. At the other end of the spectrum, a local resident may have only one problem that they want to forge ahead with solving and this may not completely dovetail with the priority problems the NAG is working on. Both of these situations were observed in the case

study neighbourhoods and it is clear that many attendees at the NAGs were coming at the meetings with very different perspectives.

The second problem with partnership identified in the research was the process of criminalization or 'ASB-icization' of social policy and 'youth'. If crime and anti-social behaviour become the central reason for interventions in a neighbourhood, there is the risk that other social service provisions (such as housing, street care, youth services, lighting, education) be viewed solely as a mechanism for reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, rather than as an end in themselves. This problem is linked to the problem of different motivations discussed above in that it is indicative of social service providers being asked to redirect their work to take into account its criminogenic and ASB-ogenic effects. A process that may not align neatly, or at all, with the policy aims of those agencies.

Alongside the criminalization and ASB-icization of social policy, the same process is occurring to the notion of 'youth'. Young people are repeatedly described by NAG members and members of the public as a 'problem', and the source of anti-social behaviour and crime. At one point a NAG chair even went so far as to say that if children can be kept in front of a computer screen for longer, they have less time to spend out on the estate breaking things. Providing longer hours of access to internet facilities reduced anti-social behaviour was the essence of the argument.

This attack on the difficulties and delights of growing up, is somewhat unfortunate. It is a confusingly mixed message that the discourse of anti-social behaviour sends to young people. They are torn between the problems of growing up and the difficulties

associated with being blamed for anti-social behaviour and other social ills. It is difficult to work out what a young person is to do? Hanging around with their friends outside is anti-social behaviour even when no harm is being done, other than the occasional pedestrian misinterpreting their risk of being mugged. Kicking footballs about breaks things, and thus is classed as anti-social behaviour. When the young person finally emerges from the youth club computer room at the age of eighteen, having no experience of playing sport or socializing with friends, they will be attacked by the state for being obese, not getting enough exercise and not having the people skills which are so desired by employers. One thing certainly emerges from this research and that is that 'youth' and 'young people' are still described as the major cause of local neighbourhood problems, from vandalism to anti-social behaviour, to destruction of garages and out of control bonfires. The question remains, is neighbourhood policing the best way to help young people navigate their first steps into a confused, footloose and uncertain late-modern world? This research suggests that it is not. The 'problems' of youth will never be successfully solved by neighbourhood policing or partnership working, until something more fundamental occurs in the way we approach the socialization of young people, particularly young males. Using the police to do so, by applying neighbourhood policing or some other technique, is merely leaving the police to try to solve the problems society cannot, or will not sort out itself. As such, the partnership work of neighbourhood policing 'young people' is bound to have little or no impact.

Problematizing problem-solving

The challenge of defining problems which are close to 'what people want' is a difficult and political one. The newly forming NAG, or the more established NAG

which is re-consulting its public, must try to be inclusive and consider the needs of as many different sectors of the neighbourhood as possible and not merely listen to those who are best politically motivated and empowered or those who speak with the loudest voice. This is an important difference between a NAG and a private node of security governance. A NAG is still trying to deliver a 'public' security function. Its interventions are intended to be for a form of public good rather than for the security of a particular interest group. This is inherently different to other nodes of security governance such as private security companies, banks, shopping malls, university campuses or other forms of what Shearing and Stenning (1981) call 'mass private property'.

Understanding this basic process for deciding what the NAG will focus on, and the democratic aspirations inherent in public consultation which are used to justify the focus on these particular problems rather than any other, is essential to understanding the motivations of many of the NAG's members. The democratic aspiration may be central to the reasoning behind neighbourhood policing itself. However, the democratic consultation process (observations of which are described more fully in chapter 4) is only the beginning of the problem-solving process. Once the NAG has established itself, it then has to work on 'solving' or ameliorating the problem(s). This process brings with it its own set of problems.

This research also looked at a more established NAG (Neighbourhood A in chapter 5). Again, if one looks at the NAG in that neighbourhood as a 'node', it is clear that it operates by interacting with other nodes in the area in order to attempt to achieve its security targets of solving the problems it has set for itself. Problem-solving

techniques, as envisaged by the police and central government may not be so simple for a NAG to put into action. The research found six main problems (set out in chapter 7) that were observed in the case studies. These problems include initial 'teething problems' as well as more long term challenges such as the problem of sustainability in the face of particularly obstinate problems and increased competition for resources. This problem of sustainability applies to all NAGs whether pilots or not. How is a chair or committed NAG member to deal with low morale from poor performances, or lack of results? How much damage is done by the movement of a neighbourhood police officer to another post in the force? These difficulties were emerging as the substantial challenges to the NAG as a successful problem-solving node.

All three of these findings are discussed more fully in the chapters above. Neighbourhood Action Groups as a component of the 'mixed economy of policing' or 'plural policing' may be best understood using a nodal governance analysis. Having used such an approach, it is clear from this research that the NAG faces substantial challenges as a node involving partners' co-operation and as a node which aspires to apply problem-solving techniques. The next two sections will briefly outline the possible areas for further research in the area and discuss the possible future outlook for neighbourhood policing generally.

Where will future research go from here?

It is clear that there is much scope for further research on how neighbourhood policing continues to operate now that all the neighbourhoods in England and Wales are up and running. The problems of sustainability and evaluation in problem-solving

will not go away easily and are likely to provide future researchers with ample difficult questions. As the 'pilot' nature of NAGs has worn off, how will those neighbourhoods which are rolled out last, and arguably with the least support (see problems of sustainability in chapter 7), survive as they try to establish themselves as successful nodes? Once these nodes become established, or at least some way along the road towards being established, it will be useful to know how well they operate in an environment where there are such a large number of NAGs competing for what would appear to be a finite amount of resources, whether that is time spent by councils on street care or private funding for PCSOs or local wardens. Will NAGs create new ways of gaining leverage over such resources or encourage partner agencies to better use resources to assist in the co-production of community safety? Could the proliferation of NAGs thus almost 'create' more resources or will each have a smaller slice of pie? If it is the latter, how will NAGs operate in relation to each other, particularly in relation to neighbouring NAGs, which may have very similar interests (for example reducing the risk of simply displacing a problem from one neighbourhood to the next)? Will NAGs compete or cooperate?

Another substantial question is how will NAGs relate to the intelligence-led policing (ILP) agenda? This is likely to be a challenging area to research given the secrecy that shrouds intelligence gathering and processing. However, it is an important one, as the use of covert intelligence and Key Individual Networks (the police euphemism for informants) to create an intelligence picture of varying sizes, from neighbourhood to nation, is poorly understood and potentially open to a lot of abuse. How can proper, credible protections be put in place to prevent such abuses? The other question raised, but unanswered by this research is about how much ILP can provide to the NAG and

neighbourhood police officer. There is a definite appearance from this research that the intelligence flow is upwards from NAG to NIM, with little tangible return. What is in it for the NAG? Will they see returns in the long run or are they simply being used as snoops for the police? These are important questions for future researchers.

Perhaps the most important question for the researcher working on neighbourhood policing in the future is about how well the neighbourhood policing agenda and the NAG as a node of security governance provides a 'public security good' in an increasingly private security marketplace. As members of late modern society spend more of their business and leisure time in spaces of 'mass private property' (Jones, 2007c: 848), and those with existing access to resources are able to protect themselves within such private properties using private security provision, there is a real risk that a rump of leftover public space will be abandoned to the police to look after. This space is likely to contain those without access to resources sufficient to assuage their own security concerns privately. These groups in society are likely to be the poorest, the most vulnerable, and in all likelihood, those most at risk of criminal victimization. It is in looking after those who cannot afford to 'go private' for their security that poses the greatest challenge to neighbourhood policing. Engaging with this question is an important area for future research as neighbourhood policing begins to become more established alongside increases in private security provision.

What is the future for Neighbourhood Policing?

Finally, it is worth mentioning briefly the future prospects for neighbourhood policing. Predicting the future is a dangerous business. The pace of social change makes such predictions exceptionally uncertain (Newburn, 2008). In discussing

(much less predicting) the future of policing, scholars have been similarly wary of what can be said with any certainty. The future is uncertain and its prediction is something of a flight of fancy.

Discussing the future of policing is both an entertaining and difficult task. Difficult, because the future is by definition unknown. Entertaining, because its speculative nature allows for greater flights of imagination than is normally possible in social scientific writing (Newburn, 2007: 225).

However, there are some consistencies in how policing has developed. Similarly there are some ways in which late-modern society has begun to shape the governance of security and these influences are evidently of import to the future of neighbourhood policing. The past forty years have clearly demonstrated that the public police have faced 'the end of a monopoly' in security provision in most 'developed' democracies (Bayley and Shearing, 1996: 586). There is no denying the increased demand for security products alongside the insatiable demand for more bobbies on the beat which characterises the contemporary field of security governance. It is perhaps fair to predict that this desire for increased security will not go away. It is also fair to predict that the commodification of security provision and 'policing' functions broadly construed will not lead to a completely private policing environment with no publicly operated police force. Although the structure (local versus central) and questions of role and function will of course continue to be the subject of academic, political and public debate.

If the police survive, it is posited that there will be a place for neighbourhood policing within their remit. While pressures of managerialism, streamlining and commodification may have the potential to strip away some functions of the police to be provided by private contractors (McLaughlin and Murji, 1995: 125), it is clear that there will remain a public-policing role. If it is managed correctly, neighbourhood policing could remain central to that role. It has two advantages of flexibility. First it is capable of being able to be described as a success in almost all neighbourhoods at almost all times, on some measure. Secondly, its flexibility allows it to be aimed at almost any problem which is the 'moral panic' (Cohen, 1972) of the day. There is no reason a NAG cannot work on the 'war on terror' for example (Innes and Thiel, 2008: 558). Indeed when police managers describe how useful NAGs can be to ILP, they tend to use examples of how locally garnered information can help prevent terrorism or give the security services a 'heads up' about garages acting as chemical stockpiles or local youths becoming 'extremists'. It is also perfectly conceivable that local NAGs could become involved in the fight against knife crime, which appears to be the current moral panic in London. From global to local, neighbourhood policing can be applied. That is the sort of flexible tool that any police force would want in its toolbox.

There are of course challenges to this cosy notion about the future of neighbourhood policing. The notion of community focussed policing can be seen as part of a cycle which can rotate back to a form of enforcement orientated policing if it becomes publicly perceived that policing has become 'too soft' (chapter 1). This could happen for example if local publics became convinced that they were being 'spun' success stories when in fact it was felt locally that neighbourhood policing and their NAG

were not serving their neighbourhood well at all. Resistance to the cyclical shift back to enforcement may be created by the dichotomy between neighbourhood policing and ‘fire-brigade’ policing within forces. In essence, if the former can do the ‘small stuff’ that comes up constantly in consultations (litter, young people hanging around, speeding, graffiti etc) and the latter can deal with the ‘big stuff’ which people appear almost completely unconcerned about at a local level (such as murder, serious assault, hate crime etc) but which is undoubtedly of central import to the public police, then perhaps the police can provide both poles of the policing cycle simultaneously. In such a scenario, the cycle could be reduced to an oscillation of relative resource outlay rather than a periodic paradigm shift in a force’s approach to its work.

The future for neighbourhood policing appears to be one whereby it stays central to the public policing response to the problems of the day. It appears to be one method of fitting the public police into the late-modern ‘security network’ by establishing a strong node of security governance within every neighbourhood in the jurisdiction. In so doing it has the potential to influence the texture of the network as it affects local security governance. It is hoped that this influence can be used to prevent the development of a large ‘security divide’ whereby those with access to resources can increase their security (and social isolation) at the expense of those without such access. If it can do this, work on the small problems of policing and maintain its relevance to the bogeymen, folk devils and moral panics of the day, neighbourhood policing will have a long, challenging and relevant future.

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